

WHEN THERE'S INCEST IN THE FAMILY
Virginia Ironside tells you how to cope

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THE CELEBRITY CHILDREN WHO GO WRONG
How fame can bring misfortune

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WHO'LL BE THE NEW DICK WHITTINGTON?
The battle for London's mayor hots up

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THE INDEPENDENT

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Thursday 26 March 1998 45p (IR 50p) No 3,568



Victims: Natalie Brooks, 12, Paige Anne Herring, 12, Stephanie Johnson, 12, Brittany Varner 11, and teacher Shannon Wright, 32

Slaughtered by 'boy who had a lot of killing to do'

By David Osborne
in Jonesboro, Arkansas

THE OLDER of the two boys who were due to be charged later yesterday with capital murder in Tuesday's horrifying attack on fellow pupils at an Arkansas school told friends only one day earlier that he was incensed at being killed by a girlfriend and that "He had a lot of killing to do."

While police would say nothing about a motive in the shooting, in which four pupils and one teacher died, anger over a romance gone wrong as well as a new affiliation with a local gang emerged as the best explanation for the minutes of terror visited on the Westside Middle School,

on the outskirts of Jonesboro, a small university and farming town in north-west Arkansas.

The girlfriend was reported to be 12-year-old Candace Porter. Candace was named as one of 10 others hit in the lunch-hour fusillade who survived and who yesterday were still being treated for their wounds. She was said to be in a stable condition and out of danger last night.

The two accused, identified in newspaper reports as Andrew Golden, 11, and Mitchell Johnson, 13, were to be charged later yesterday at the county detention centre where they have been in custody since Tuesday.

Local prosecutor Brent Davis said that under Arkansas law the pair could be tried only as juveniles. This would

imply that even if they were found guilty and served the strictest sentence they will walk free on their 18th birthdays.

While teachers suggested that both boys had had good records of obedience in the 250-strong school, it seemed that Johnson had boasted recently of joining a gang. He had reportedly been involved in a knife fight on Monday and had spoken to several friends that day about his murderous intentions. No one, however, took him seriously.

"He told us that tomorrow, you will find out if you live or die," one pupil, Melinda Hanson, told reporters. Another, Charles Vanover added: "He told me yesterday that all the people who broke up with him, you know,

he's going to come to school tomorrow and kill them. I thought he was just kidding around."

Mr Davis attempted yesterday to damp down speculation over the motive, however. "I don't think logical explanations or reason will fit this type of situation," he suggested.

Anticipating public outrage at the likely leniency of an eventual sentencing, Mr Davis added that he would "explore all options" to try the boys in a manner to keep them behind bars beyond 18. That would imply intervention in the case by the federal courts.

Arkansas Governor Mike Huckabee visited the school yesterday and expressed his dismay over the shooting. "It makes me angry, not so much

at the individual children that have done it as much as angry at a world in which such a thing could happen."

Myriad questions remained unanswered last night. Who, for instance, was the owner of a white van found parked near the crime scene on Tuesday with a stash of weapons inside? And how did the boys get hold of some nine weapons they used to fire off their bullets?

In Arkansas there is no law forbidding minors from owning and using rifles. Only handgun ownership is illegal for children.

The four children killed were identified as Natalie Brooks, 12, Paige Ann Herring, 12, Stephanie Johnson, 12, and Brittany Varner, 11. Sitting ducks, page 13

IRA splits put peace on the brink

By David McKittrick
Ireland Correspondent

THE security forces believe a dangerous new threat to peace in Northern Ireland has developed from a recently-emerged and as yet unnamed breakaway republican group with access to IRA technology.

The group is believed to be responsible for a number of attacks, most recently Tuesday night's mortar attack on Forkhill Royal Ulster Constabulary station in south Armagh. The authorities regard it as a major danger to security in general and to the talks process in particular.

The Forkhill attack and other operations are designed to disrupt the talks, which are now in their final phase. The chairman of the talks, former US senator George Mitchell, yesterday set a deadline for a deal by 9 April, suggesting that the parties go into continuous session for the previous three nights.

The authorities fear that the period up until then will be punctuated by further attacks emanating both from republicans, including the new grouping, and loyalists such as the renegade Loyalist Volunteer Force.

The new republican grouping is thought to be headed by dissident IRA members who resigned from the mainstream organisation last November in opposition to the peace process strategy identified with the Sinn Féin president, Gerry Adams, and his supporters.

Their political line is believed to be that the Adams leadership has strayed too far from traditional "Brits out" republicanism. In this they are regarded as supporters of a political grouping styled the "32 County Sovereignty Committee." Much of this group's support is thought to come from disaffected former Sinn Féin supporters.

Another breakaway republican group, the Continuity Army Council, has been carrying out bombing attacks in Northern Ireland towns for several years now, but the new grouping, though only a few months old, appears to have access to more sophisticated technology than the CAC.

In addition to the Forkhill incident it is held responsible for a similar mortar attack on a security installation in Armagh city some days ago. These are the only mortar attacks carried out in Northern Ireland by a group other than the IRA, and as such they demonstrate a fast-increasing destructive capability.

The RUC Chief Constable, Ronnie Flanagan, yesterday contradicted Ulster Unionist claims that recent attacks had involved the IRA. He said: "These attacks have largely been by republican terrorist organisations. They are not the work of the Provisional IRA."

He added, however: "The IRA remains an organisation which is intact and which presents a threat to this society ..."

IRA's future, page 21

Farewell to welfare as Blair orders Britain to work

By Anthony Bevins
and Fran Abrams

AFTER 50 years' faithful service, Tony Blair's Labour government will today wave good-bye to the Welfare State as it is replaced by a new system that leaves a high-grade safety net only for those who absolutely need it.

The long-awaited welfare Green Paper, A New Welfare Contract, will make clear beyond doubt that those who can work have a "duty" to do so; those who can provide for their own security should "help themselves" while those who can do neither will be looked after...

Trailing the Green Paper, Mr Blair said during Commons question time: "What is important is that we have a welfare state in which there is work for those who can, security for those who can't, and opportunity for those denied it."

There was no question, the Prime Minister's official spokesman explained later, of offering a low-grade safety net for the destitute. There would be more help for those in the greatest need. Of that, he said, "no one need fear."

But the new model welfare system will overturn decades of passive welfare, in which claimants have sat back and

waited for their giro cheques.

In 1948, when the welfare state came into existence, two-thirds of those claiming National Assistance, the precursor to today's Jobseeker's Allowance, were retired. Now, over two-thirds are below retirement age, and the Government is determined to do all in its power to get them off welfare and into work. That is the contract.

They have been given the £5bn New Deal welfare-to-work programme, offering them opportunities of work or training. The Budget will make work pay more than benefits, and the next and final stage is to target the welfare system

on those who really need it.

Today's consultative document will be accompanied by a Commons statement from Frank Field, a politician whose career, has been dedicated to this fundamental change - in which people will be offered responsibilities to go with their rights, to break the cycle of dependency and insecurity.

The Green Paper will not contain a detailed shopping list of hard-and-fast policies on each benefit, but MPs are expected to be given an outline battle-plan, showing which legislation is coming up in next autumn's new session of Parliament, and when other

decisions can be expected.

A review of the uprating of the state pension is due to be delivered in June, and a number of other reviews are expected to accompany the comprehensive departmental spending review - timed for delivery in July. That could include answers on the Child Support Agency, benefits for the long-term sick and disabled, and Housing Benefit.

The seemingly intractable problems of housing benefit were exposed yet again yesterday, when successive social security ministers - Tory and Labour - faced scorching criticism from the Commons Public Accounts Committee for

not tackling massive levels of Housing Benefit fraud. The new Government is about to grasp that nettle.

The Commons report said that fraudsters almost never face prosecution, despite the fact that an estimated 400,000 of them are milking up to £2bn from the state each year. Of those who are detected, fewer than one per cent are taken to court. Just under half of all local authorities brought even one prosecution last year.

"The waste of public money on Housing Benefit fraud is massive and inexcusable, and it has gone on for far too long," the report says.

Mary Allen is forced to quit in new melodrama at Royal Opera House

MARY ALLEN resigned last night as chief executive of the Royal Opera House, writes David Lister. Her departure climaxes an extraordinary year in which the ROH has been savaged by a House of Commons select committee, seen its chairman and board resign and some of its most senior staff sacked.

Mrs Allen was strongly criticised by the National Heritage select committee last year over the manner of her move from Secretary-General of the Arts Council, which funds the Royal Opera House, to take over as chief executive of the house. The post was not advertised and the Arts Council not consulted.

Gerald Kaufman, the committee chairman, repeatedly called for her resignation. But though the ROH chairman, Lord Chadlington, resigned in the wake of the report, Mrs Allen refused to go and said she would serve under the new chairman Sir Colin Southgate who is also the chairman of EMI.

But yesterday at a heated board meeting Mrs Allen was told by Sir Colin and the board that they wanted an artistic director not an administrator to run the House. Insiders say she argued strongly that it needed "a strong arts administrator to cope with the financial difficulties" at the ROH.

But the board rejected her arguments. They were said to be

shaken by the recent defection of the Royal Opera Company's director, Nicholas Payne, to the English National Opera, and felt the House needed artistic credibility. Mrs Allen was said last night to be extremely upset.

An ROH statement said only that there was "a growing difference of views over the future plans for the organisation".

In truth, Mrs Allen's position has looked unstable following the select committee's report, criticism from the Arts Council (her chairman there Lord Gowrie said he had "bonded too closely" with her in explaining why he did not block her move when he appeared before the select committee) and the fail-

ure of Chris Smith, Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, to back her publicly. She has always maintained that the criticism was unfair, saying "If there were mistakes, they were honest mistakes".

The Royal Opera House is currently the subject of an inquiry of opera provision in London being headed by Sir Richard Eyre.

Funding shake-up, page 3



Mary Allen criticised by National Heritage committee

THE NEW ASTRA VAUXHALL

"On the Monopoly board of small batches, it's Mayfair. With a hotel on it."

WHEEL CAR APRIL 1998



QUALITY IS A RIGHT NOT A PRIVILEGE

INSIDE GUIDE: WEATHER, P2 • CROSSWORDS, P32 AND EYE P10 • TODAY'S TELEVISION, EYE P12 • FULL CONTENTS, P2

TOMORROW IN FRIDAY'S EYE

32 pages of film and music

■ Jarvis Cocker: nothing to laugh about

■ John Lyttle: why Kate Winslet is too big for Titanic

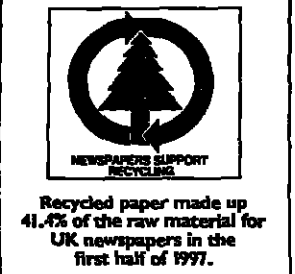
■ Portrait of Andrea Quinn, new boss at the Royal Ballet

■ Catherine Deneuve: still Belle de Jour



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Recycled paper made up 41.4% of the raw material for UK newspapers in the first half of 1997.

Success of Aids drugs brings its own risks

By Jeremy Laurance
Health Editor

THE transformation of Aids from a death sentence to a treatable condition is raising a new spectre among doctors: that it will encourage carelessness about sex and a resurgence of the epidemic.

The extraordinary success of the Aids drugs introduced in the last four years in cutting the death rate from the disease has radically changed patients' lives. But as the threat of full-blown Aids and death recede for those infected with the HIV virus, they are increasingly demanding to know whether they can return to unprotected sex and start families.

The progressively more intense anti-retroviral drugs with which they are being treated dramatically reduce the amount of virus present in the blood. Testimony to their success is contained in a study in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, which shows that among more than 1,200 patients with the severest immunosuppression caused by HIV infection, the incidence of Aids decreased by 73 per cent and deaths by 75 per cent between 1994 and mid-1997.

In New York, Aids deaths fell 29 per cent between 1995 and 1996 and by 44 per cent between 1996 and 1997. Similar falls have been recorded in Canada, France, Germany and Switzerland. One HIV activist quoted in the journal said: "Instead of classes on how to write wills we now need classes on how to find employment."

But if treatments reduce the amount of virus in the blood, they also reduce it in

genital secretions. Does this mean that "unsafe" sex can be safe again? Doctors are unsure. In an editorial, Bernard Hirschel and Patrick Francioli of the 12th World Aids Conference, Geneva, say: "Patients seek our advice about their infectiousness but we are unable at present to provide clear answers."

They warn that Aids campaigns must highlight the limits of current treatments to prevent carelessness and a return to old sexual habits.

The new treatments also raise a new dilemma: when to start the drugs. They are powerful agents with side-effects that can be shrugged off in life-or-death situations but which acquire greater importance as survival prospects improve. Although their effectiveness is proved beyond doubt in patients with severely affected immune systems, in others the balance of advantage is less clear.

The side-effects, which include loss of fat from the body and an excess in the blood, "are likely to matter to young asymptomatic [without symptoms] patients who care about their body image and who may worry about the risk of heart disease in the years ahead."

Drs Hirschel and Francioli say that the treatment which is now saving lives in the West is an "inaccessible dream" for most Aids sufferers who live in the developing world because of its cost: \$12,000 (nearly £7,500) a year. "Nothing is likely to bridge the gap between the rich and poor countries. Only prevention and perhaps some day a vaccine are likely to make a real difference," they say.



Media-friendly: The cast of *Friends* in London yesterday to promote a series for Channel 4. (Back row, left to right) Matt Le Blanc and David Schwimmer; (front) Courtney Cox, Matthew Perry and Jennifer Aniston. Photograph: Peter Macdarmid

Railtrack cash plan falls flat

By Randeep Ramesh
Transport Correspondent

Plans for a 10-year, £17bn spending spree on the nation's railways were attacked by the industry regulator yesterday after intervention by the watchdog saw his office launch an immediate investigation into the "commitments" to passengers.

Railtrack, which owns Britain's stations and signalling, published its spending programme, which it described as "a blueprint to regenerate the railways". But John Swift QC, the regulator, said the pro-

gramme contained "very few firm commitments to deliver significant improvements" for passengers and freight customers.

Mr Swift said he would find out if train operators thought Railtrack's management statement met their needs. He received strong backing from the Deputy Prime Minister, John Prescott, who welcomed Mr Swift's action. Industry observers say the plans contain little new money for the network. Despite the headline figure, £16bn was promised last year and a further £640m is part of a deal with Richard Branson's

Virgin group to upgrade the west coast line.

The ride for passengers is also set to get worse. Railtrack identified 15 congestion hot-spots on the network. Despite this, the situation will not improve until 2002 at the earliest. Sir Robert Horton, Railtrack chairman, said: "There are real congestion problems at certain times of the day and these have to be overcome. The problem is in part the need for ever-increasing numbers of passengers on the network." Paul Prescott, a Railtrack director, said: "Some train companies require

to grow by 10 per cent a year."

However this increase in "train miles" has adversely affected punctuality. Figures show an increasing number of poorly performing train services. "This is due to a 5-per-cent increase in train miles," said Mr Prescott.

Aslef, the train-drivers' union, has long criticised Railtrack for its safety record and yesterday Lew Adams, general secretary, said it was launching its own initiative which would see drivers "moderating their speed" over track they considered "dangerous".

Officers suspended pending jail inquiry

By Jason Bennetto
Crime Correspondent

SEVEN prison officers were suspended at a private jail last night after an inquest jury ruled that an inmate awaiting trial had been unlawfully killed after he was placed in a necklock during a violent struggle.

The family of Alton Manning, 33, who died of asphyxia at Blakenhurst prison near Redditch, Worcestershire, in December 1995, immediately called for the prison officers involved to be prosecuted.

The Prison Service announced that seven officers had been suspended at Blakenhurst jail, which is run by the private company UK Detention Services Ltd, while investigations are carried out. The Crown Prosecution Service is believed to be studying the findings to decide whether criminal charges should be brought.

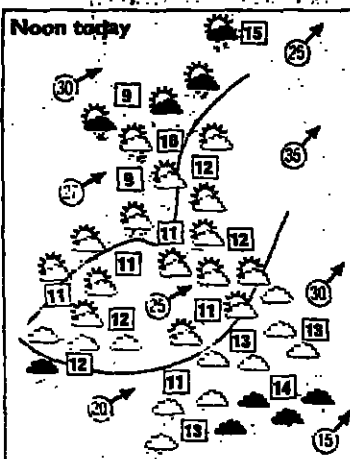
Campaigners yesterday called for an end to use of headlocks as a restraint technique, which is being reviewed, and for the Home Secretary to set up a public inquiry. The Prison Service was accused of failing to heed past lessons of past - this is the third unlawful killing verdict returned for an inmate in jail since 1979.

The unanimous verdict by the inquest jury at Kidderminster town hall, after 15 days of evidence and testimony from 30 witnesses, was greeted by cheers from the public gallery.

The hearing heard how Mr Manning, of Sparkbrook, Birmingham, had pressure placed on his neck at some stage before he was pronounced dead at the privately run jail.

The jurors heard from a Home Office pathologist that the prisoner, who stopped breathing while being removed from a cell, suffered bruising to his back and neck. He died of asphyxia consistent with his breathing becoming impaired while being restrained, they were told.

WEATHER



British Isles weather

City	Temp	Wind	Cloud	Precip
London	9-11	W 10-15	Partly	0.0
Birmingham	8-10	W 10-15	Partly	0.0
Manchester	7-9	W 10-15	Partly	0.0
Edinburgh	6-8	W 10-15	Partly	0.0
Glasgow	6-8	W 10-15	Partly	0.0

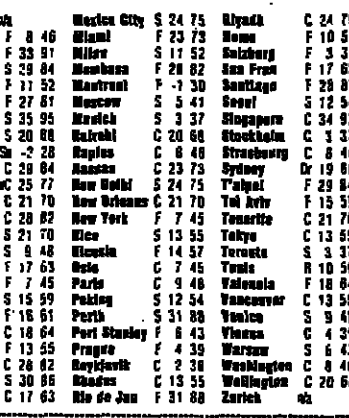
World weather

City	Temp	Wind	Cloud	Precip
New York	4-6	W 10-15	Partly	0.0
London	9-11	W 10-15	Partly	0.0
Paris	8-10	W 10-15	Partly	0.0
Madrid	12-14	W 10-15	Partly	0.0
Rome	13-15	W 10-15	Partly	0.0

INDEPENDENT Weatherline

City	Temp	Wind	Cloud	Precip
London	9-11	W 10-15	Partly	0.0
Birmingham	8-10	W 10-15	Partly	0.0
Manchester	7-9	W 10-15	Partly	0.0
Edinburgh	6-8	W 10-15	Partly	0.0
Glasgow	6-8	W 10-15	Partly	0.0

Atlantic chart, noon today



MICHAEL HANLON WEATHER WISE

IF IT were not for a wonderful invention patented 96 years ago, much of the south-east of the United States, including Florida, Alabama, Georgia and the Carolinas, would have remained wilderness, alligator swamp and farmland, instead of being home to some of the most rapidly growing cities in the Union, such as Miami and Atlanta.

All this is down to one man, Willis Haviland Carrier. Like the invention of the elevator, which made the skyscraper possible, Carrier's brainwave - air conditioning - allowed the urbanisation of the Deep South, a place with a truly nasty summer climate - combining very high temperatures and humidity.

Carrier's first patent, for "an apparatus for treating air", was filed in 1902. At-

tempts at air-conditioning had been made before, but as these involved huge quantities of ice that had to be replaced, they were far from practical. Carrier's machines worked on the same principle as the refrigerator, compressing gases with a pump, and allowing them to expand, taking heat from their surroundings.

Initially, only industry was interested in his idea. Carrier's first customer was a Brooklyn printing company, which was having problems in the summer with its colour dyes. But soon the value of aircon was realised, and it was reported that "patrons exclaimed with delight when they got through the doorway" of a newly air-conditioned Texan theatre.

Department stores and businesses found they could increase sales and productivity by keeping cool, and by the Fifties aircon was common in homes and cars across the country.

Thanks to the ubiquity in the US of Carrier's invention, few Americans would tolerate the sticky and unpleasant conditions still commonly found in British offices, schools, cars and homes in July and August.

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An era ends as racecourse bookies go on line

By Greg Wood
Racing Reporter

THE BRITISH racecourse betting ring, a throwback to a different age which has barely changed since Victorian times, is to undergo the most dramatic and far-reaching reforms in its history over the next 18 months.

Grizzled, ageing bookies calling the odds from the top of upturned wooden crates could begin to disappear as early as this October, under recommendations published yesterday by a committee which has spent many months studying the arcane ways of the

ring. Other changes will include a relaxation of the strict rules on where bookies can stand, and allow their "pitches" to be positioned around the paddock and hospitality areas - in other words, places where it is easy for their customers to reach them. They will also be required to post a bond before being allowed to trade, and make an audio tape recording of all transactions.

The most dramatic change, however, will be in the appearance of the betting ring. For decades, the standard bookie's "joint", the structure from which he operates, has been little more than a hastily erected heap of boxes and junk metal. The new joint will be a standard construction of coloured, moulded plastic, with a power supply to allow the use of both a tape recorder and, almost inevitably, a computer, since the end is also in sight for traditional bookmakers' tickets.

At present, on-course bookmakers call a punter's bet to a clerk who shares their pitch, and issue a colourful, pre-printed betting ticket which gives the bookmaker's name and a unique number, but nothing more. From 31 December 1999, the ticket will be required to list not just the bookie's name and address, but also the race time and name, the ticket number, the name of the horse backed, the stake, odds, type of bet and the potential return. A computerised system for handing bets will thus be almost essential.

The average age of bookmakers also seems certain to fall. Until now, a system of "seniority" has governed the allocation of racecourse pitches, with bookies often spending 20 years or more on a waiting list before they are allowed to work at the biggest tracks. Soon though, they will be able to auction their pitches to the highest bidder, which may persuade many of the oldest gentlemen of the ring - several are well into their 80s - that the time has finally come to retire.

Any radical change will have its casualties, however. The bookies' clerks, whose skill and accuracy in filling out huge ledgers of bets and liabilities, sometimes at the rate of a ticket every four seconds, is one of the wonders of the track, may be redundant when the computers arrive.

Tic-tac, the racecourse semaphore system, should still be essential, however, and one other familiar feature of the joint will surely remain. No bookie, after all, would feel complete without a very deep satchel.

Funds cap on arts companies

By David Lister
Arts News Editor

THE country's biggest arts companies, including the Royal Opera House, Royal Shakespeare Company and National Theatre, are likely to be put on fixed-term funding contracts.

An end to the 50-year-old system by which the same companies, by and large, can expect to continue to receive public money year after year was promised yesterday by the incoming Arts Council chairman

Gerry Robinson. Mr Robinson, who also chairs Granada PLC, was brought in by Culture Secretary Chris Smith to bring a more business-like approach to the Arts Council and arts funding.

His first initiative is sure to take the arts world by surprise. He said at a lunch with arts journalists yesterday that he would be bringing in "funding contracts" ranging from one year to five years for all the Arts Council's clients. When their time was up they would have to prove again that they were worth public money and the council would decide if they were actually good enough. He said this would encompass all the well-known names including the Royal Opera House and the Royal Shakespeare Company.

Mr Robinson said: "We have to have a period of time in which

we can say in five years time we will have another look at whether they should have the money. You need a mechanism which enables you to look at it quite freely and make a judgement."

"There is a real problem under the present system that funding just carries on. I think the London Arts Board [which recently cut funding to Greenwich Theatre] has been very brave in saying that certain organisations are not up to the mark."

Mr Robinson also said that the Arts Council had been "ineffective" in recent years and did not seem to have any overall policy. Part of his philosophy he said, was "to fund fewer organisations better".

In the past the council has occasionally ceased funding small companies. But while the major clients may suffer variations in their grants, they have been secure in the knowledge that they are seen in perpetuity as publicly funded flagships. This could now change.

A spokesman for the Royal Shakespeare Company said: "We will have to wait and see what happens. We have to plan several years ahead anyway so we would not be against fixed-term contracts as such. But we would certainly be extremely shocked if there was any thought of us ceasing to be publicly funded."



Subsidised: A performance of Das Rheingold at the Royal Opera House in London

Photograph: Laurie Lewis

Stumbling dinosaur toddler finds a path into posterity

By Nicholas Schoon
Environment Correspondent

ABOUT 113 million years ago, a dinosaur toddler stumbled into a shallow, murky lagoon and drowned. In doing so it gained an extraordinary immortality, for today it is described as the most well-preserved dinosaur fossil ever found.

Muscles, intestines, liver and even traces of the unfortunate infant's windpipe can be seen in the exquisitely-detailed fossil, although - strangely - none of the skin remains.

The reptile was probably less than 2ft long from nose to tail; the exact length will never be known since the end of its tail is missing, as are the lower parts of its back legs. It only had its baby teeth, and the Italian palaeontologists who describe it in this week's issue of the

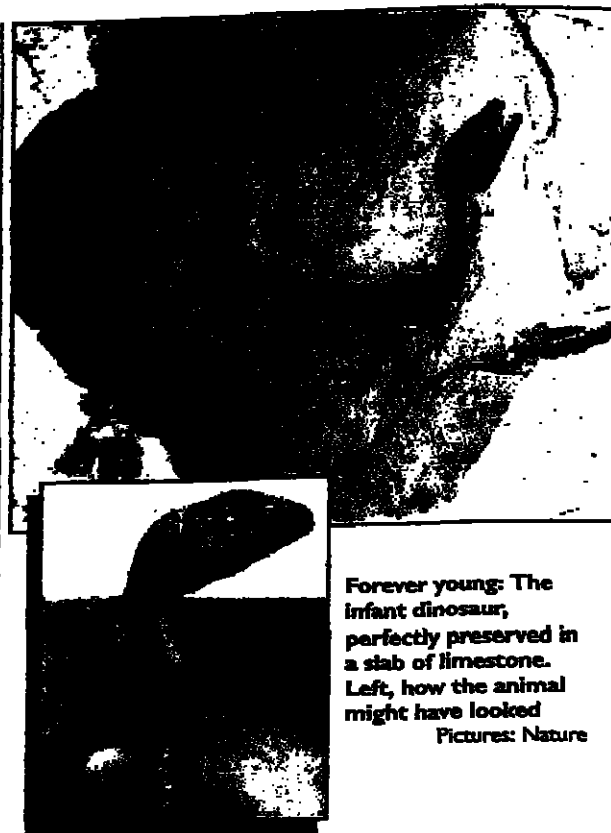
science journal *Nature* say it was "little more than a hatchling".

The dinosaur fossil was discovered in limestone in the Benevento province of southern Italy, which is well known for its superbly preserved fish fossils.

The rock is the remains of sediments laid down in shallow lagoons with low oxygen levels during the early Cretaceous.

Cristiano Dal Sasso, from the Natural History Museum in Milan, and Marco Signore, of Bristol University, claim that the fossil "shows details of soft anatomy never seen previously in any dinosaur".

A carnivore, it stood on two legs, had front limbs with three sharp claws, and is distantly related to the fearsome *Tyrannosaurus rex*. It is the first dinosaur fossil to be found in Italy, as well as being a species new to science.



Forever young: The infant dinosaur, perfectly preserved in a slab of limestone. Left, how the animal might have looked. Pictures: Nature

Irish autocrat haunted by smell of skeletons in the cupboard

IN THE NEWS

CHARLES HAUGHEY

AUTOCRATIC to the end, former Taoiseach Charles Haughey was yesterday bluntly defending his claim that whatever he and his family accumulated during his years in power is nobody's business but his own, writes Alan Murdoch in Dublin.

He was in the High Court in Dublin flanked by wife Maureen, daughter Eimear, and sons Conor and Sean, to stop in its tracks a Dail-backed tribunal investigating his finances. By extension that inquiry would also delve into the background to a range of government decisions during a cabinet career spanning over 30 years.

Though propped up by a crutch after a riding accident in which he broke a hip, Mr Haughey was in full command of his battling faculties. The man once famous for his terrifying baleful stare denounced the latest investigation into his affair by Judge Michael Moriarty's tribunal.

The aftermath of Haughey's rule has been an avalanche of investigations into a smell from a dusty cupboard marked "Skeletons, property of The Boss." He kept a straight face some months ago when telling a judicial tribunal "I just want to say that I did not have a very lavish lifestyle. My work was my lifestyle." For the record, this is the owner of Abberville, a sumptuously furnished north Dublin Georgian mansion on a 280-acre estate, a yacht and a private island off Kerry.

Other features of a diligent life of public representation include a family-owned helicopter firm run by son Ciaran, loans to which greatly interested tribunal investigations, and a stud farm. Haughey senior also likes fine wines, opulent hotels and debonair female company. The problem is that such indulgence exceeded his ability to pay for it as a salaried politician. Like the third secret of Fatima, most Dubliners expected to go to their graves without hearing the real source of his wealth. But for the disclosure during a family row by Haughey fan and former stores magnate Ben Dunne that he had bailed out the cash-strapped politician to the tune of £1.3m between 1987 and 1992, they could be none the wiser. Haughey at first denied then confirmed the payment.

Suspicion grew that there might be other Ben Dunes. Questions were raised in the Dail about who they might be and what



Haughey: Spent £300,000 a year in the Eighties, several times his salary

they may have got in return. There was much interest in disclosures that Dublin financier Dermot Desmond had loaned cash to refurbish Haughey's yacht and paid in advance for executive helicopter service.

In January Desmond confirmed he provided Haughey with further funds from 1994, two years after he left office. Desmond's stock-brokerage grew rapidly in the late Eighties, aided by a stream of contracts from Haughey's government.

After an initial appraisal of evidence, a full tribunal last summer established that cash gifts to Haughey had been channelled through offshore accounts held by Irish multi-millionaires known as the Ansbacher deposits, at times holding up to £38m. Haughey's personal expenditure in

the Eighties was put at £300,000 a year, several times his salary.

Yesterday Haughey seized on that first tribunal's conclusion that it had made no finding of "political impropriety" against him. This being so, he argued, the setting up of the second tribunal under Judge Moriarty was "constitutionally doubtful, and grossly unfair."

Haughey signalled he was not going to give an inch. He was, he promised, ready to defend every decision he had made as Taoiseach or as a minister right back to 1961. His lawyers claimed the latest tribunal is no more than "a trawl" through his finances, and argue it may be unconstitutional, since it effectively seeks to use recent ethics legislation retrospectively.

FOUR-TIMES Taoiseach Charles Haughey is fighting a reported back-tax and penalties bill from Ireland's Revenue Commissioners of £1.7m.

WHEN BOWING out in 1992 from his impressive offices (known as the "Chris Mahon") he dusted down his Shakespeare and observed to the Dail "I have done the state some service and they forgot. No more of that."

IN 1970 he was acquitted in the Arms Trial amid accusations that funds he controlled as finance minister for the relief of Catholics in Northern Ireland had found its way into the hands of the embryonic Provisional IRA.

ASKED BY a tribunal last year if his earlier false statement about accounts were "pretty economical," he replied: "I hate that phrase. It has been flogged to death."

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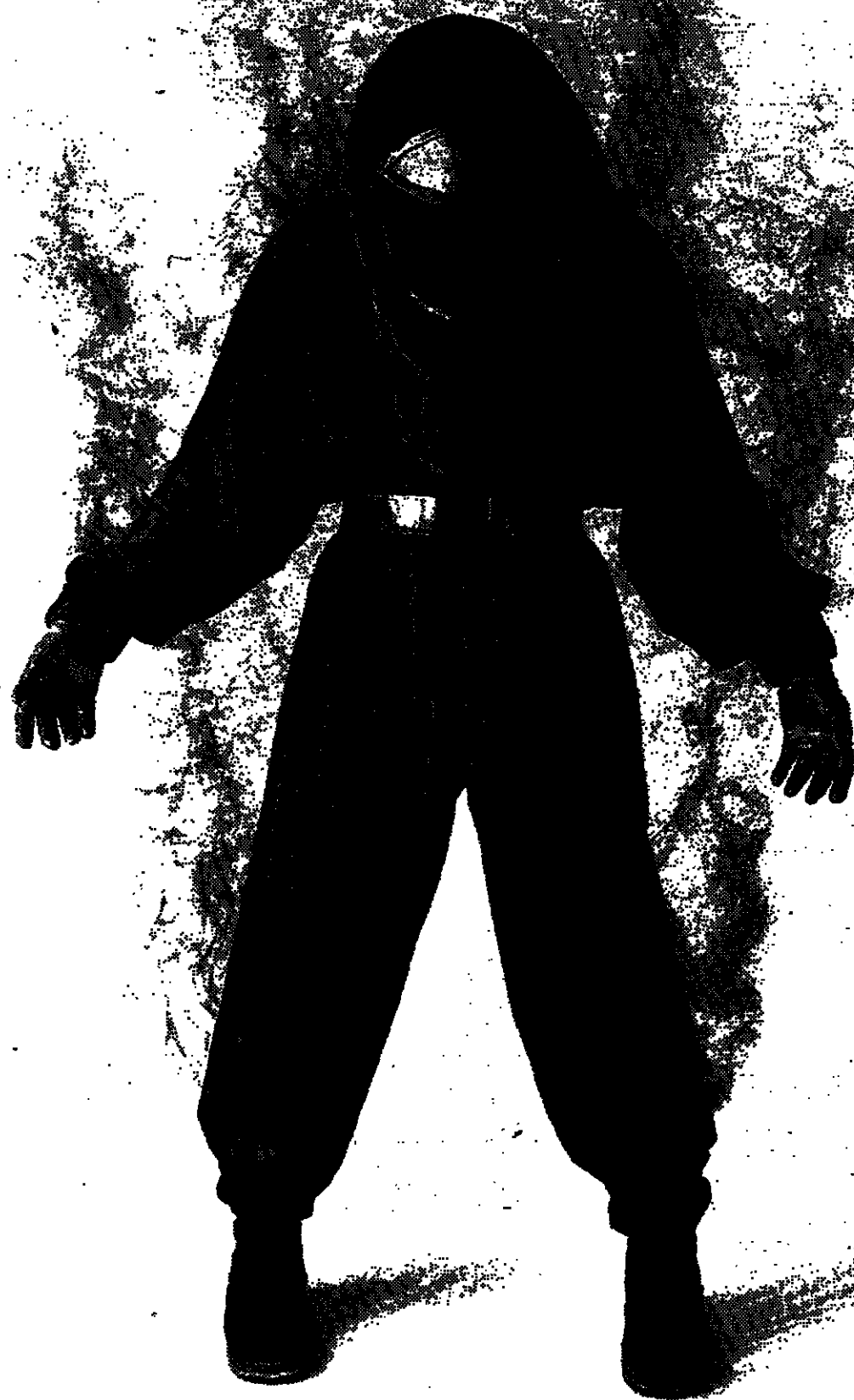
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مركز المعلومات



Poachers' slip

A MOST interesting copy of a letter on *Guardian-Observer* stationery, signed by the newspapers' editors Alan Rusbridger and Will Hutton, has landed on Pandora's desk. The text of the letter is old noxious stuff: a crude sales pitch designed to lure *Independent* readers to defect sent out in early February. What makes this letter interesting is that it is addressed to "Mrs N Major" at 10 Downing Street, London, SW1. Pandora feels that the boastful claims made by Messrs. Rusbridger and Hutton in the letter are hideously undercut by the fact that they - or their staff - appear not to have noticed that Mrs. Norma Major moved out of 10 Downing Street in the middle of last year. (In the meantime, Pandora has taken steps to ensure that Mrs Major, a loyal *Independent* reader, continues to receive her copy every day at her Huntingdon home.)

Commercial logic

AUTHORS and literary agents on both sides of the Atlantic are incensed by the Bertelsmann purchase of Random House. The deal will reduce the major players in United Kingdom book publishing to just three: Random/Transworld (Bertelsmann-owned), HarperCollins and Viking-Penguin. Random/Transworld will control more than 26 per cent of the UK fiction market and literary agents fear the deadening effect that this will have on formerly lucrative blockbuster novel auctions. At the same time, authors fear that this is yet another example of the "corporatisation" of publishing that has driven so many talented editors out of the profession and left the marketers in control.

However, yesterday Louis Baum, editor of the *Bookseller* magazine, put a refreshingly optimistic view of the deal to Pandora. "Yes, this makes Random/Transworld a formidable player, but I don't think it reduces competition in respect of publishers selling books into the market," he said. He believes that the deal will be good for booksellers and book readers. "This is going to change attitudes. Bertelsmann is the third largest media group in the world. Their willingness to invest in books will make the City more keen to invest in publishing. Everyone will see that there's money to be made. In the end, I think more books are going to be sold in this country as a result."



Teutonic tactics

IN THE meantime, where are the Eurosceptics now that we need them? Where is all the rhetorical thunder and lightning about the fact that our precious British literary culture is rapidly falling under Teutonic control? Before the latest Random House capitulation there was a great British family publishing house called Macmillan that was quietly conquered by the German company Holtzbrinck.

Sparklers and pigeons

CALLING all anti-hunting militants. It's time to pack your black balaclavas and head off to South Africa. The SA government has just announced its intention to shoot all the pigeons in its north-western region. The reason diamond thieves are using the birds to transport their sparkling booty out of the heavily policed zone. According to Manda Msoni, chairman of the SA parliament's public enterprises committee, "The law now is to shoot all pigeons on sight." If you are not the militant type, you might think of expressing your disapproval at this outrage by sending all your diamonds to Pandora's Save the African Pigeon Fund. Then again, you'd be mad if you did that.

Sexgate ripples spread

THE CLINTON Sexgate saga is so popular with readers in America that the usually solemn United States broadsheets are losing their composure in the heat of the battle for good stories. Indeed, backs from the *New York Times* have been accusing the *Washington Post* of being biased towards Paula Jones and her lawyers, while the *Post's* backs have come out accusing the *Times* of being partial to Clinton's lawyers. Recently, the *Times* published an article that described a *Post* article as "mostly wrong". Good stuff, the kind of journalism British readers enjoy every day. But the stuffy self-satisfied *New York Times* lost its nerve and only put the story in its final edition, excluding it from the *Times* Internet site.

Pandora

DAILY POEM

The Dry-Cleaner's Son

By Neil Powell

The dry-cleaner's son is ruining my life.
Two years ago, he'd help out Saturdays,
Slight boyish chores rewarded with ice-cream.

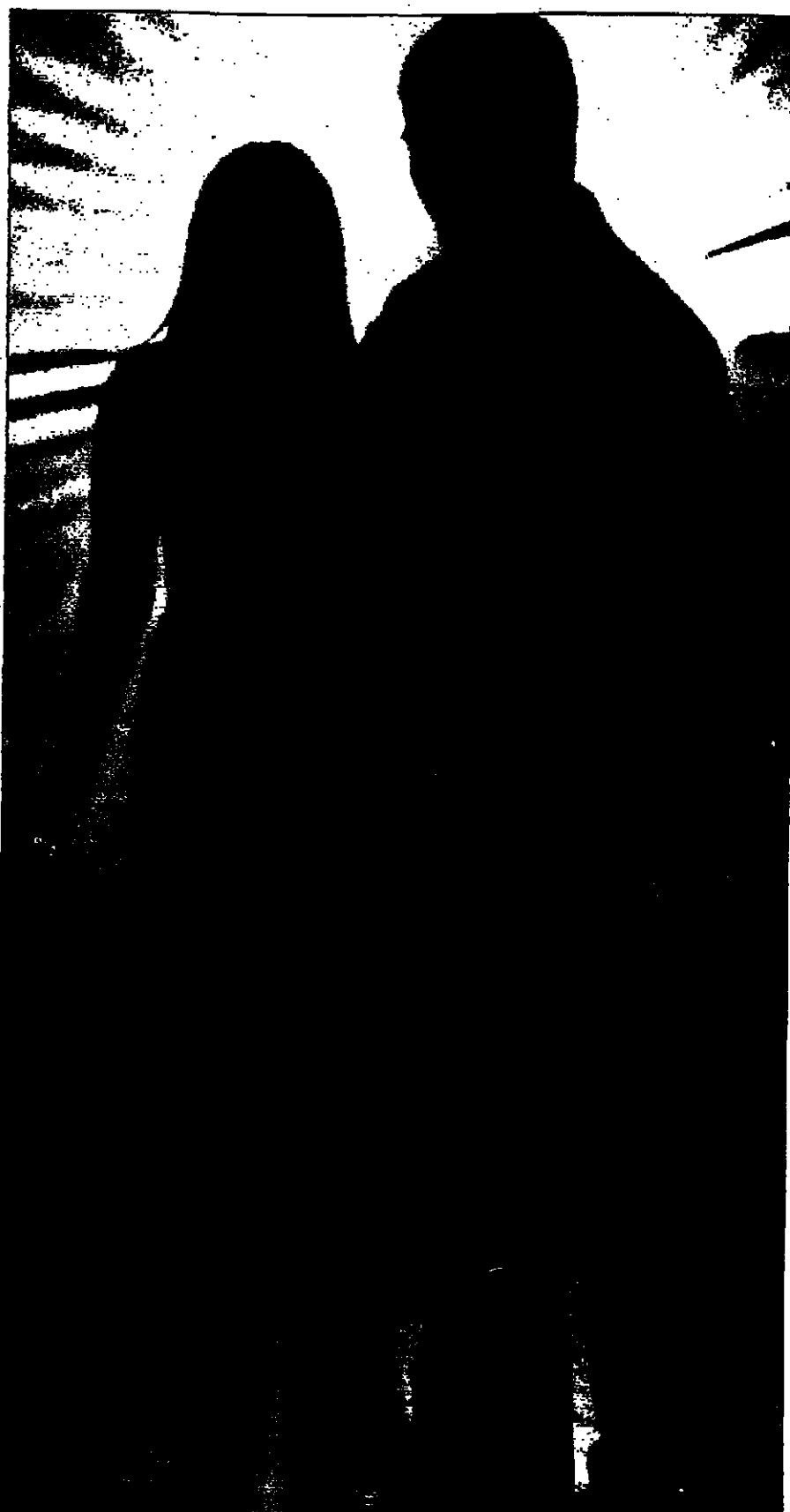
Last summer he'd grown lanky, self-aware:
Out in the street, washing his father's van,
They staged a grand ballistic water-fight.

Now, taller of the two, he calls me "mate",
Will deputise for dad, or join him in
A loose bravado, male confederacy.

His shirts - today, gigantic hippie flowers -
Are as loud as his crotch-line; and his former selves
Lost postcards from the summers left behind.

Star poems today and tomorrow come from Neil Powell's Selected Poems (Carcantel, £8.95). Neil Powell, who lives in Alderbury, Suffolk, has published critical works such as *Carpenters of Light* and *The Language of Jazz* as well as four collections for Carcanet since 1977.

Clubbers dance to bouncers' drug-trade tune



Rare on: Criminals are using club bouncers to sell drugs Photograph Andy Blackmore

By Jason Bennetto
Crime Correspondent

ORGANISED criminals are employing bouncers to sell drugs and using violence to collect "taxes" from other doormen and dealers operating in clubs and pubs, a Home Office study reported yesterday.

The research uncovered direct links between bouncers, criminals and drug dealing, and found corrupt security companies operating a "control the doors, control the floors" strategy. The findings of the study, which examined the use of bouncers in Merseyside and Northumbria, will add pressure on the Home Office to introduce legislation to control the unregulated and booming door-supervisor industry.

Jack Straw, the Home Secretary, has been criticised for dragging his feet on the issue.

Despite repeated promises to regulate the industry, the Home Office has merely carried out a second consultation exercise and insisted that action will follow.

The report, *Clubs, Drugs and Doormen*, carried out by the Home Office's Police Research Group, provides compelling evidence of the widespread illegal activities of bouncers and their

bosses. It said that bouncers were involved in drug dealing in a number of ways.

"Staff may simply turn a blind eye to dealing activity, receive payment in return for permitting dealing on the premises, or act as dealers themselves."

Some bouncers held a stock of drugs which they distributed to dealers working in the clubs once stocks were sold. Women dealers were becoming increasingly popular as they are less likely to be searched.

A study of Liverpool found that well-organised criminals ran a security firm that used violence and bribery to take over the bouncers at clubs and pubs who then controlled the drug supply.

In Newcastle criminals were not so closely involved and were more likely to "tax" bouncers and approved drug dealers who operated in the clubs.

A council door-registration scheme in Newcastle, in which bouncers have to be approved and trained, was praised, but researchers said it was not a panacea and did not prevent all drug dealing.

The expanding dance market, in pubs, clubs, and warehouses, provides criminals with

an opportunity to make huge profits.

A survey last year found that 90 per cent of 517 people in London questioned at dance events said they planned to take drugs that evening. About half were going to take cannabis and ecstasy, about 40 per cent amphetamines, and 16 per cent LSD.

Among the recommendations in yesterday's report was for the police to use more undercover teams in clubs, to find out more about bouncer's drug-dealing techniques and to monitor the men behind security companies providing doormen.

A scheme at the Ministry of Sound club in London, where half the bouncers are hired from the West Midlands and a code of conduct has been drawn up, was also praised as helping drive out criminals.

Local authorities were recommended to set up more doormen-registration schemes and enforce health and safety regulations.

New powers for local authorities to close down clubs immediately where drugs were found to be sold are to come into power in May.

■ *Clubs, Drugs and Doormen* is available free from the Home Office, Fax 0171 273 4001

The Liverpool and Newcastle experience

ORGANISED criminals were found to have infiltrated the pub and club scene in Merseyside to sell drugs. One security company operated a "control the doors, control the floors" approach to the distribution of drugs. It moved into Liverpool by buying up existing bouncers with cash bribes or using violence and intimidation against those who refused to co-operate.

The firm's bouncers either sold the drugs to club- and pub-goers directly or took a cut from the doormen.

During a period between January 1995 to December 1996 police inquiries identified 49 bouncers working in Merseyside who were known to them. Nine had convictions for drug offences, one director had a conviction for drug production. A head doorman at one club was facing a charge of conspiracy to supply. Twenty-

eight of the men had convictions for violence including two murders and three attempted murders. The police arrested and jailed three of the men in charge of the company, but within a year a new firm, containing several members of the old one, was operating in Merseyside. Manchester, Warrington, and Southampton.

The connection between drugs and bouncers in Newcastle is not as acute as in Liverpool yet police believe about one in 10 of the estimated 1,200 doormen are involved in crime.

Drug dealers and criminals rely on "intimidation and extreme violence" to force doormen to pay them a "tax" and to allow approved dealers into the clubs and pubs. At least 38 doormen are known by the police. Twenty-five have been convicted of violence, including murder.

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Think different.

Lawrence family felt scorned by police

By Kathy Marks

A SENIOR police officer investigating the murder of black teenager Stephen Lawrence was handed a list of suspects by his parents, which he screwed up into a ball before their eyes, the judicial inquiry into his death was told yesterday.

Doreen Lawrence, 45, Stephen's mother, made an impassioned attack on police in a statement to the inquiry. They had treated the family with disdain, she said, and had kept them in the dark about the progress of the investigation into Stephen's death.

Two liaison officers assigned to the Lawrence family were interested in gathering information about her son than in providing support, she said in a statement read to the inquiry in south London. The officers repeatedly asked them about Stephen's friends and whether he had belonged to a gang.

"They never actually told us what their role was," said Mrs Lawrence. "We were never given any information. As the days went by, we were never made aware of anything that was happening."

The inquiry, chaired by Sir William Macpherson of Cluny, is examining the issues arising from the death of Stephen, 18, who was stabbed by a white gang at a bus stop in Eltham, south-east London, in 1993.

Mrs Lawrence told the inquiry panel that the names of murder suspects were passed to the family by visitors and relatives in the days after Stephen died. Two weeks later, when arrests had still not been made, she gave a list of the names to a senior officer on the investigation, Detective Chief Super-

intendent William Tiley. "He rolled the piece of paper up into a ball in his hand," she said. "I don't think I said anything. I was so shocked."

Mrs Lawrence alleged that police officers were patronising and unsupportive from the outset. When the family first heard from a neighbour that Stephen had been attacked, they telephoned 999 for more information and were told: "It's news to us."

At the hospital, she said, officers did not speak to them at all. "The police did not come and say to us that your son has died, and this is how he died, this is what happened."

The liaison officers appeared mainly interested in people who congregated in the Lawrence's home after Stephen's death, including members of anti-racism groups, she said, adding: "The people in our house were all black. The people who killed my son were white."

Five white local youths were eventually charged with murdering Stephen, but the case never reached trial. Mrs Lawrence said that the family found out about the first arrests from the media.

Constable Linda Bethel, one of the first officers on the scene after Stephen was attacked, told the inquiry yesterday that she did not find out that he had been stabbed until three hours later.

Although he was lying on the pavement in a pool of blood, she did not fetch her first-aid kit from the patrol car. "I did not appreciate that he was in a bad state, that he was going to die," she said.

The public inquiry continues today.



Stepping out: The model Chantelle Stephenson wearing an outfit (dress, £355; shoes, £220) from Moschino's couture collection at the opening of the Milan fashion house's new shop in Conduit Street in the West End of London yesterday

Photograph: Nicola Kurtz

Blair vows to fight crime and racism

By Anthony Bevins
Political Editor

THE crime and racial discrimination that make the lives of so many members of the ethnic minorities intolerable would be tackled by the Labour government, Tony Blair said last night.

Speaking at a London dinner for about 350 successful Asian business people, the Prime Minister said: "I want to see your success extended to others. And that can be helped by a government willing to tackle those things that make life intolerable for too many people:

in particular crime and discrimination. I am proud that Britain is a multicultural society that works. The modern Britain I want to create is worth nothing if it is built on intolerance towards those of a different colour, religion or beliefs."

"Cultural diversity enriches Britain. The contribution of the Asian community makes Britain a better place to live. You are central to Britain's strength in the future. That is why we will continue to promote opportunities for all across all parts of government and society. Because any society that dis-

criminate against people because of their background is not just a society lacking morality, but a waste of real talent."

At the start of Prime Minister's questions in the Commons yesterday, Mr Blair told MPs that he would be attending the "Asian 200" dinner, and there was a roar of approval when he said he was going "both to celebrate the enterprise of the Asian community and reiterate our total opposition to racism in all its forms."

Last night, in his Café Royal speech, he said: "We will tackle under-representation across

key areas of society... And we are tackling crime, especially among young people. Crime levels are far too high. Especially in the inner-city areas where many Asian businesses are located and where many Asians live. And he is no doubt that we will not tolerate racial harassment."

Following *The Independent's* call for a political stand to be taken against racism, Alex Salmond, leader of the Scottish National Party, said yesterday that once the Scottish Parliament had been set up, his party would be introducing strong

anti-racism laws, going beyond existing British legislation. "Scotland's reputation as a place of tolerance and ethnic diversity is precious to the SNP and to all who live here," he said.

The Commission for Racial Equality also announced that it had lifted the threat of issuing the Ministry of Defence with a formal Non-Discrimination Notice, but under a partnership agreement signed by Sir Charles Guthrie, Chief of the Defence Staff, the CRE is to remain closely involved in developing racial equality practices in the services until at least 2003.

Man quizzed over murder

DETECTIVES investigating the murder of 14-year-old Kate Bushell yesterday arrested a 20-year-old man. He is being questioned at an Exeter police station about the murder of the schoolgirl, who was killed while walking a neighbour's pet dog near her home on the outskirts of the city last November.

Kate's body was discovered by her father, Jeremy, just 300 yards from her home. Her throat had been slashed. Murder hunt police ordered DNA tests on all men living in a half-mile radius of the scene.

Alert over pills

THOUSANDS of packets of paracetamol tablets are being recalled after it was discovered that some were contaminated with aspirin. M&A Pharmaceuticals Limited is withdrawing from sale packs of 25 500mg Mandanol tablets after concerns that the rogue pills could be a danger to children or those people allergic to aspirin.

Drink-drive limit

A CROSS-PARTY committee of peers last night called for the drink-drive limit to be reduced to about one pint of beer.

While backing the European Union proposed limit for the UK of 50mg of alcohol per 100mls of blood, the committee refused to support an EU directive to harmonise the drink-drive laws across Europe.

Doncaster arrest

DETECTIVES investigating allegations of corruption at Doncaster yesterday arrested a Labour councillor. Michael Collins was arrested on suspicion of false accounting in a long-running inquiry into expenses, foreign trips and relationships between councillors and developers.

Border demand

THE Home Secretary, Jack Straw, is to demand that the Belgian government take action to halt the flow of bogus asylum seekers arriving in Britain after being ordered out of Europe's "open borders" area.

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مكتبة الامم

Film-world levy to put Britain in the frame

By David Lister
Arts News Editor

THE Government is asking the film industry to pay a voluntary levy in order to raise £15m a year for training, distribution and script development.

The Film Policy Review Group, chaired by the film minister, Tom Clarke, and Stewart Till, chairman of Polygram Film Entertainment, has asked the industry to pay half a per cent of the film and video companies' film revenues. It has also recommended that the Government open a UK film office in Los Angeles to entice Hollywood producers to make films in Britain.

The group was set up by the culture minister, Chris Smith, with the objective of finding ways of improving the market share of British films. It also wants to see film education in schools and the Arts Council switching lottery money away from production of new British films and into development and distribution.

Mr Smith said yesterday it was planned to have the voluntary levy in place by next year and the film office in Los Angeles up and running by this September. Mr Clarke added: "This report is the biggest review of British film for 30 years. It is not a quick fix."

"Rather, a logical series of interlocking proposals which will in time create a more robust and competitive industry to benefit of British audiences and the British economy."

But the initiative was condemned as "misbegotten" by the film critic Alexander Walker. He said there was too much emphasis placed on big money, as successful pictures like *Mrs Brown* and *The Full Monty* "could not have been smaller".

He also said: "We are already known in Hollywood for what we make. We don't need rebranding or promoting out of our class or beyond our creative powers."

"Hollywood isn't really a creative industry, it is an imitative one. What's initiated is the last big success and this has made for a formulaic predictability, compared with the freshness of our own one off approach."

Film publicist Sara Keene, who was on one of the review group sub-committees, defended the notion of film education in schools: "If you educated people about film, then they demand better films and will not be satisfied with formulaic and lightweight Hollywood-style movies."

Further proposals in the report aim to strengthen the supporting infrastructure for developing the film industry. The report recommends that the statutory definition of a British film should be amended to make it more practical and user-friendly. Additionally, a new definition of a "culturally British film" should be introduced to assist monitoring and marketing. Mr Smith said: "The Government places special emphasis on the creative industries. They make up a huge and growing part of our economy, bigger even than manufacturing and with limitless potential as new forms of communication make access to creative input ever easier and more enticing."



Flying the flag: Ralph Fiennes in a scene from *Olegin*, a forthcoming British film backed by American money, which is being shot in Britain and in Russia

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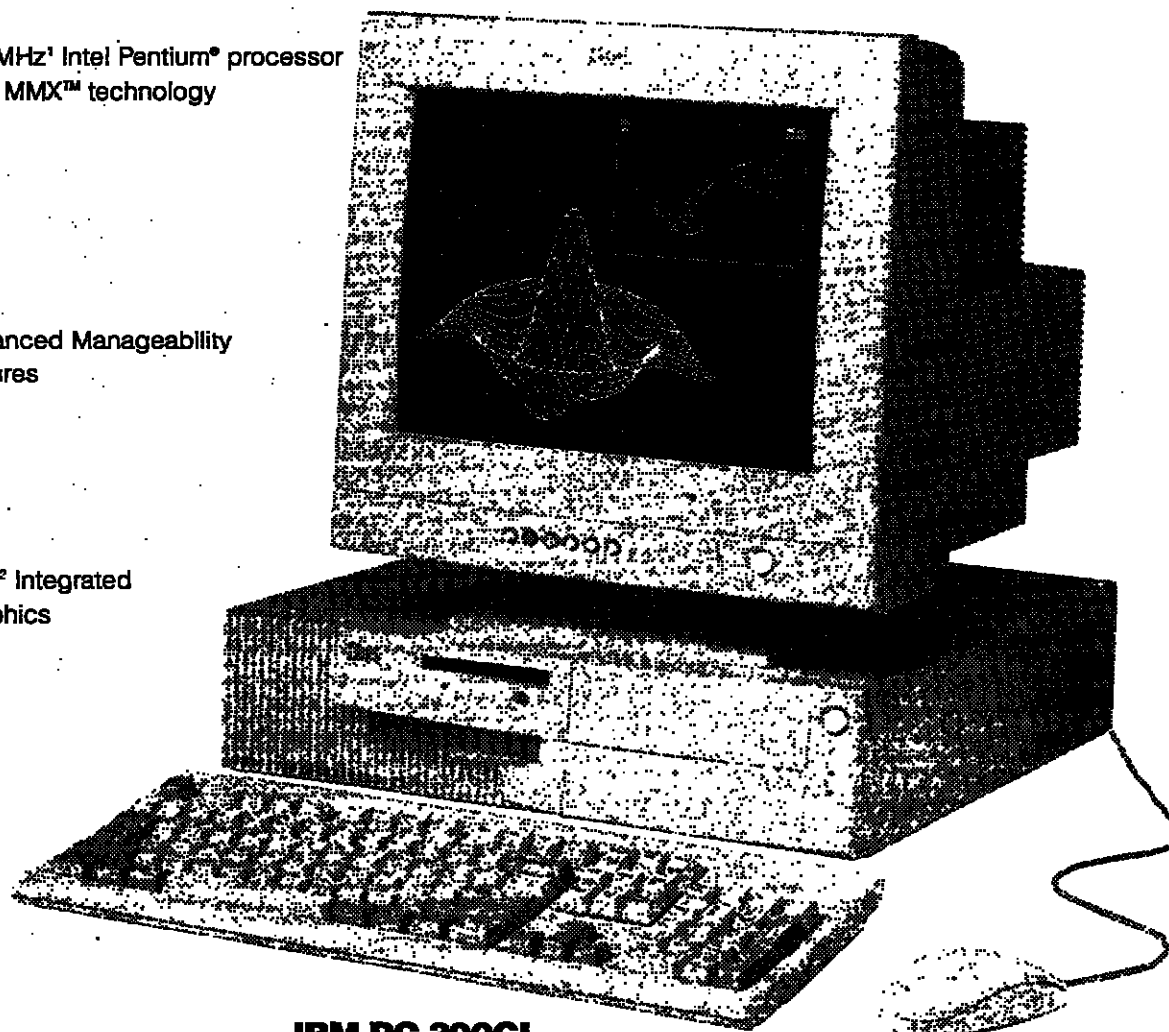
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Wildlife cost in water wars

By Nicholas Schoon
Environment Correspondent

BIG cuts in water bills could leave wildlife and wetlands high and dry and polluted, conservationists argued yesterday.

The Environment Agency, the Government's leading green watchdog, said it was possible to have five years of unchanged bills while still safeguarding rivers, lakes and marshes.

It joined pressure groups attacking the industry's economic regulator, Ian Byatt, head of Ofwat, for saying he wants an across-the-board cut in bills in 2000. This, they claim, pre-empt the debate about what it will cost to protect the environment.

Mr Byatt and other combatants in England and Wales' water war were on the platform at a London conference organised by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds. At issue is the limits on household water bills which will be imposed on the water companies for the years from 2000 to 2005.

Mr Byatt plays the lead role in setting them, but the Secretary of State for the Environment, Deputy Prime Minister John Prescott, decides the balance of power between the environment, customers and

water-company shareholders.

The price limits will not be settled until next November. Until then, there is a three-way fight, with distrust and hostility between the parties, all of which could be sensed yesterday's. In one corner is Mr Byatt, determined to push through price cuts. The average bill, £243 this year, has doubled since privatisation in 1989; even once inflation is accounted for, the increase works out at nearly 40 per cent.

In the second corner are the Environment Agency and English Nature, the Government's wildlife protection arm. They fear that too little money will be devoted to improvements to smaller sewage works and boreholes needed to protect rivers, lakes and bogs.

The third group is the water companies, anxious to protect profits and shareholder dividends. On hand yesterday was Mr Prescott's deputy, the environment minister Michael Meacher. His speech covered all the conflicts, noted the decision for the Government on water bills was difficult, and gave away nothing about what it would be. But, after railing at water "fat cats" in opposition, Labour will find it tempting to endorse a cut in bills.

Targets for GCSEs

SECONDARY schools should set targets for 16-year-olds' GCSE results, Stephen Byers, the school standards minister, said, suggesting that local authorities might agree the targets with their schools, writes Judith Judd.

Ministers have not yet decided whether to set national targets for GCSEs similar to those for 11-year-olds. Local education authorities already have to agree targets in English and maths at the end of primary school. They must also agree targets with individual schools.

But Mr Byers, who was speaking at a Local Govern-

ment Association conference, made it clear that local education authorities must not "nanny" schools. As he issued a new code of practice outlining authorities' powers to intervene in schools, he warned that the power should be used sensibly. Authorities should go into a school "only if there is reasonable cause for concern. We believe schools must be responsible for their own performance," he said.

The new code tries to strike a balance between the powers of local authorities on the one hand and heads and governors on the other.

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Artist 'carried remains on bike'

AN ARTIST "trying to understand death" rode a motorcycle through London carrying stolen bits of dead bodies wrapped in bin-liners inside a rucksack, a court was told yesterday.

Anthony-Noel Kelly, 42, a former butcher, who made silver and gold-coloured sculptures from the parts, told police the largest and heaviest was the head and torso of an old man.

Fortunately, preserving fluid they had floated in for at least 18 years at the Royal College of Surgeons' headquarters had kept them "limp", and he had no trouble folding the arms across the chest for easier transportation. Southwark Crown Court in south London was told.

Mr Kelly, of Clapham, south London, and Niel Lindsay, 25, a former trainee lab technician from Stoke Newington, north London, both deny stealing parts of dead bodies from the college between June 1991 and November 1994. Mr Kelly also denies dishonestly handling them. The case continues.



Canadian walkabout: Prince William shaking hands with admirers gathered to greet him in Vancouver yesterday. Prince Charles and his two sons are on the family's first official visit to North America since Diana, Princess of Wales died last summer. Photograph: Jeff Vinnick/Reuters

Publisher fights with 'Mail' over Diana book

By Louise Jury

THE *Daily Mail* and a London publishing house are locked in a disagreement over a biography of Diana, Princess of Wales by Richard Kay, the journalist closest to the Princess.

The newspaper said it has signed a deal with Bantam to turn a series of articles into a book. But the publisher is playing down the newspaper's involvement and has heavily promoted the book - *Diana, The Untold Story* - at the London Book Fair, emphasising the Kay authorship.

The newspaper and publisher will meet next week to discuss how the book should be marketed for the launch on 10 July.

Among matters to be clarified will be the billing of Geoffrey Levy who was co-author of the series of newspaper articles. Mr Levy was not mentioned in a glossy brochure at the fair or in the publisher's catalogue.

Mr Kay is well-known as the princess's confidante, but has always been extremely sensitive about the friendship and his close relations with her family. He attended her funeral as a private guest and refused to write about it.

A book by him "unveiling the truth about her childhood, her ill-fated marriage to Charles, the men who came into her life..." in the words of the publisher's brochure, would be a publishing coup.

The catalogue says: "[Richard Kay] feels that his role remains to put the record straight about the life of the princess and describes a very different woman from the bitter bulimic portrayed in Andrew Morton's biography... From his special standpoint as Diana's mouthpiece, Kay tells the untold story".

A spokesman for the *Daily Mail* said last night that it was the newspaper's own venture and that it had received the £50,000 advance, not Mr Kay, as *The Independent* has reported.

A spokesman for the newspaper said they had made a "staggeringly large cheque" to the princess's memorial fund, set up to raise money for her

charities, when they had begun the *Diana, The Untold Story*, series. "If you ring up the memorial fund and asked them how they felt, they would tell you about Richard Kay, Geoffrey Levy and the *Daily Mail*", the spokesman said.

The newspaper refused to say whether any of the proceeds of the book would go to the two reporters. But the spokesman said Richard Kay had received the information contained in the series as a *Daily Mail* reporter and that information belonged to the newspaper.

The book will bind together the 12-part series with an introduction: Adrian Singleton, who signed the deal for Bantam,



The brochure promoting the book at the London fair

part of the Macmillan group, said there would be a new 2,500-word introduction, but the *Daily Mail* insisted yesterday that the book would contain nothing which had not been published in the newspaper.

Mr Singleton said he expected it to be a success: "We expect to sell an awful lot of copies. It happens to be an extremely good book, it's beautifully written and a great story."

No mention was made of the *Daily Mail* or Mr Levy in the information prepared for the London Book Fair because that was a rights fair for foreign buyers. Mr Singleton said: "I haven't decided yet whether I'm going to call it a *Daily Mail* book."

Trustees of Diana's memorial fund last night refused permission for an American toy firm, Hasbro, to make a *Sindy* doll looking like the princess.

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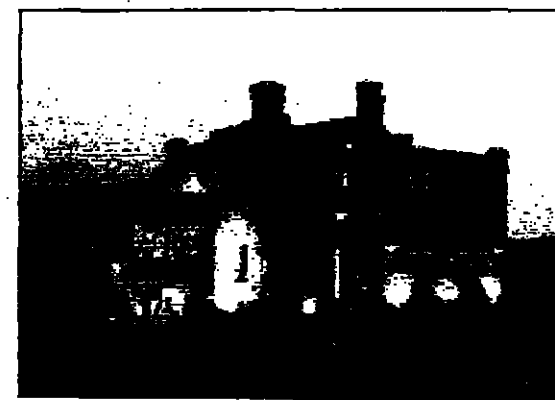


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MoD concealed radiation leak at A-bomb base

By Jeremy Laurence
Health Editor

VITAL information about the release of radioactivity after an accident at Greenham Common airbase was withheld by the Ministry of Defence from the government-appointed committee set up to investigate it, a report says today.

Members of the Committee on Medical Aspects of Radiation in the Environment (Comare) were "quite angry and disturbed" when they found that details of the 1958 accident, in which a B-47 bomber was destroyed, had been concealed, Professor Bryn Bridges, the chairman, said yesterday.

It is the third time the committee has been lied to since it was established a decade ago to advise the Government on the effects of radiation in the environment. Professor Bridges said: "I hope the climate of disclosure is changing. The public would expect it to change."

The latest case of non-disclosure meant a 1989 investigation by the committee into the high incidence of childhood cancer in west Berkshire had to be reopened. That in-

vestigation considered whether the rate could have been caused by radioactivity released from the three nuclear establishments in the area, at Aldermaston, Burghfield and Harwell. It concluded that the radioactivity from these sources was too low but did not know about the possibility of a release from the airbase.

In 1996 the Department of Health asked the committee to return to the issue after the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament said, on the basis of a secret MoD report, that a nuclear weapon had been damaged in the Greenham Common accident, releasing a burst of radiation.

In today's report the committee says there is nothing to suggest, on the basis of the information supplied to it, that a nuclear weapon was involved in the accident, in which an aircraft preparing for an emergency landing dumped fuel in the wrong part of the airbase, destroying the B-47 on the ground. Levels of radioactivity recorded by the MoD in 1961 were no higher than known releases from the Atomic Weapons Research Establish-

ment at Aldermaston studied in the committee's earlier report and were too low to account for the excess childhood cancers.

Professor Bridges said the excess of cancers was not unique to west Berkshire. Other counties, including Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire, also have high rates which are unexplained. Although the report confirms the earlier finding, that radioactivity in the area cannot explain the cancer cluster, the committee remains concerned that the public will lose trust in its work unless organisations can be depended on to co-operate. Professor Bridges, of Sussex University, said: "The MoD is a major player in the nuclear field and its responsibility is no less than other sectors of the nuclear industry to make relevant information available."

The MoD had been "caught in an impasse" because the relevant documents were classified secret. "They couldn't tell us they existed, and because we didn't know they existed, we couldn't ask for them. As soon as we knew of them and asked for them [following the CND report], we got them."



Aquatic encounter: Valerie Taylor, a leading diver and underwater photographer, in a tank with sharks yesterday at the London Aquarium to promote the London International Dive Show which will be held at Olympia, west London, on Saturday and Sunday
Photograph: John Voos

Young men turn to unhealthy pub life

By Glenda Cooper
Social Affairs Correspondent

MORE young men are turning to unhealthy pub-based lifestyles, drinking and smoking too much and seeing games of snooker or pool as their favourite exercise.

According to the General Household Survey, compiled by the Office for National Statistics (ONS), one in eight young men aged 18 to 24 drinks on average more than 50 units of alcohol a week when the Department of Health recommends no more than 21 units.

The proportion of young men drinking more than the recommended limit reached its highest level in 1996, with more than four in ten men exceeding the limit.

Young men were also more likely than any other age group to smoke. In 1996 43 per cent smoked compared to 37 per cent in 1988. Teenagers were most likely to smoke high-tar cigarettes with 79 per cent of men and 66 per cent of women doing so. However, they did smoke fewer cigarettes, with 16- to 19-year-old men smokers

averaging 82 cigarettes per week and women 68, compared to 111 and 96 for men and women smokers overall.

Social class plays a large part in determining how likely you are to smoke. The ONS found that men in households headed by someone in unskilled manual work were four times as likely to smoke as men from a professional household. Women, in similar circumstances, were three times as likely to smoke.

However, the reverse is true when it comes to drinking where professional women were three times as likely to drink more than the recommended levels than those living in unskilled households.

Young women also showed a marked tendency to drink more than the suggested levels with a quarter of 18- to 24-year-olds drinking more than 14 units a week compared to one in seven in 1984.

Men drink on average 16 units per week compared to 6.3 for women. Exercise for men commonly consisted of a game of snooker or pool, whereas women preferred swimming and keep-fit. For leisure activ-

ities 99 per cent of adults had watched television in the four weeks before being interviewed. There was an increase in the number of people reading with two-thirds of adults saying they had read a book in the weeks before interview compared with 54 per cent in 1977.

We are also becoming a nation more obsessed about its well-being, according to the General Household Survey.

One in 16 people said they had an acute illness which restricted their activity compared with 8 per cent in 1972.

"These are self-reported so it is a question of perception of illness," said Paul Hunter, a researcher for the GHS. "But greater expectation of a healthy lifestyle could be the cause."

Nearly one in five of adults said they were anxious or depressed, with a greater proportion of women than men reporting this. Anxiety and depression was highest amongst women of 75 and over.

■ *Living in Britain. Results from the 1996 General Household Survey* is available from the Stationery Office price £39.50.



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Cannabis marchers to test law with dope sandwiches

By Graham Ball

THE former drugs smuggler Howard Marks is to test a loophole in cannabis laws this weekend by offering himself for arrest for eating sandwiches made up of cultivated marijuana seeds.

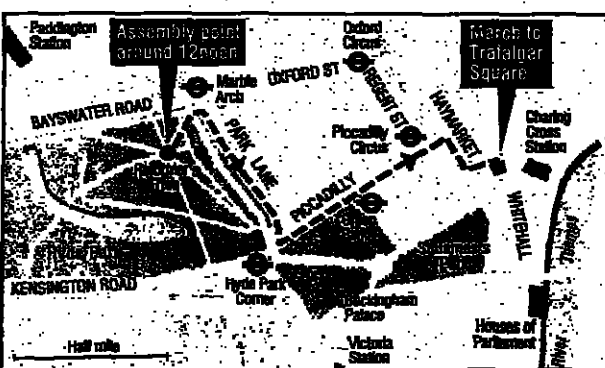
In yesterday's *Independent* it was reported that police chiefs are urging the Home Office to bring in new laws banning the trade in cannabis seed and dope-growing equipment.

At present it is completely legal to buy, sell and possess cannabis hemp seeds but it is illegal to grow them.

The Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) is lobbying the Home Secretary to close what they consider to be a serious legal loophole.

Mr Marks will make his move on Saturday, following the *Independent* on Sunday's criminalisation of cannabis march and rally in Trafalgar Square. The plan to expose the inconsistency of the present law is the brainchild of a Glastonbury-based drug campaigner who has changed his name from Robert Christopher to Free Rob Cannabis.

Mr Cannabis has been in contact with the Home Office Action Against Drugs Unit and



ascertained that in their view the sprouting of cannabis seeds is deemed to be cultivation and therefore against the law.

"After Saturday's march Howard Marks is to join me at Charing Cross Police Station where we will offer ourselves for arrest for the crime of distribution and possession of 'sprouted hempseed' sandwiches," said Mr Cannabis whose Free Medical Marijuana Foundation distributes cannabis by post to those who self-administer the drug to alleviate medical ailments.

"According to the Home Office we will be in breach of the law despite the fact that sprouting hempseed is one of the most nutritious balanced food sources known to man. The

food is also entirely drug free, containing no THC [the psychoactive ingredient of cannabis] whatsoever," said Mr Cannabis.

Howard Marks, who served eight years in an American prison for cannabis trading in the 1980s and is now a best-selling author, deplores the ACPO proposals.

"It seems that the police are determined to pull in the wrong direction, despite the obvious recent changes in public attitudes. Banning the sale of seed will not make any difference to the overall quantity consumed. It will just drive the trade further underground," he said. ■ For more information on Saturday's march call 0181-964-2692.



London calling: If Chris Patten (left) ran, his likely rivals would include Lord Archer (second left), Simon Hughes, Glenda Jackson and Trevor Phillips

Tories press Patten to join race for Mayor of London

By Colin Brown
Chief Political Correspondent

SENIOR Conservatives last night were making a renewed appeal to Chris Patten, former governor of Hong Kong, to throw his hat in the ring for the first elected Mayor of London after declaring it a "real job with real power".

He refused to stand until he was convinced it was a real job, but a friend said: "We are hoping he will now decide to stand. There are real powers for the new mayor." Mr Patten is seen by some Tories as the best hope to stop Lord Archer, the author, and so far the most enthusiastic campaigner for the post.

Frank Dobson, the Health Secretary, was emerging as Tony Blair's preferred choice to run

against Ken Livingstone, the former GLC leader, and Labour MP who announced yesterday he would be standing.

Mr Dobson has made it clear he wants to continue with his Cabinet role, but that could change next year if he was invited to stand. He is viewed by the Labour leadership as the strongest candidate to beat Mr Livingstone, a member of the party's national executive with a following from his days as the charismatic boss of the GLC.

Glenda Jackson, transport minister for London, will also declare her hand after the May 7 referendum, which is expected to be overwhelmingly in favour of having an elected mayor. The Tories did a U-turn, and confirmed yesterday they would be campaigning with

Labour and the Liberal Democrats for a "yes" vote, putting the result beyond doubt.

The Deputy Prime Minister, John Prescott, gave the clearest signal so far that the elections for mayor and assembly will be brought forward to autumn, 1999 to put both in place in time for the millennium, and well before the next election.

Mr Prescott said the new mayor will be "a powerful figure" with an electorate of over 5 million voters.

The Mayor will be elected by supplementary vote, allowing voters to mark their first and second choices of candidate, while the 25-member assembly will be elected by the additional-member system, with 14 directly elected by the first-past-the-post vote and 11

drawn from London-wide lists to reflect the position of the parties. It is likely Labour will ensure places for women and ethnic minorities by this system.

The white paper unveiled by Mr Prescott will put the Mayor and the directly elected assembly in charge of a £3.3bn budget with powers over police, fire, and transport services, buses, roads, river services and a say in the future of London Underground. There will be a new 23-strong Metropolitan Police Authority, with 11 drawn from the assembly. The Home Secretary will appoint 11 members and one will be drawn from the district councils outside London.

The most potentially controversial powers are over the boroughs, and Sir Norman Fowler, Tory environment

spokesman, protested that importance of the boroughs was being reduced. The Mayor will have strategic power of planning, with the right to reject planning permission for developments that do not fit in with his plans; disputes will be decided by the Secretary of State for the Environment.

The Mayor will set the Budget, which will have to be approved in a vote each year by the assembly.

The Government has yet to decide where the greater London authority (GLA) will be based, but possible locations for its offices include County Hall, the former GLC building; offices at Canary Wharf and Admiralty Arch, which was used for the homeless at Christmas.

Leading article page 20



Turn again: Ken Livingstone as his famed predecessor, during his time as GLC supremo

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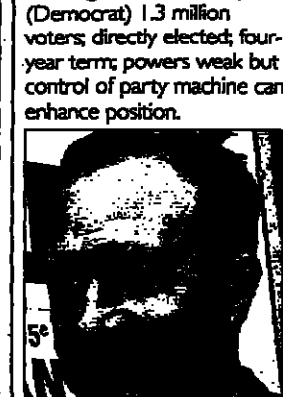
Role models

London: 5 million voters; directly elected; four-year term; powers wide ranging and cannot be sacked by assembly.

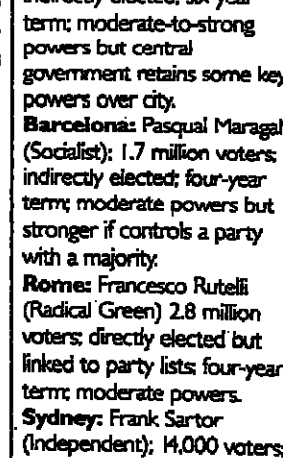
Munich: Christian Ude (Social Democrat); 1.3 million voters; directly elected; six-year term; moderate to strong powers as chief executive of the city.



New York: Rudy Giuliani (Republican, above); 7.5 million voters; directly elected; four-year term; very strong powers - personally appoints main departmental heads, except police chief.



Chicago: Richard Daley (Democrat); 1.3 million voters; directly elected; four-year term; powers weak but control of party machine can enhance position.



Paris: Jean Tiberi (Gaullist, above); 2.2 million voters; indirectly elected; six-year term; moderate-to-strong powers but central government retains some key powers over city.

Few black faces in the corridors of power

By Randeep Ramesh

LONDON is the capital, not only of the country, but of Black Britain. Yet one of the few places you will have to look hard for London's ethnic minorities is in the city's corridors of power.

At present a little more than 10 per cent of the capital's 700-plus councillors are black, and none head local authorities - despite making up a quarter of the population. Under the present system - and that proposed for the mayor and the Greater London Authority - there is little chance for a change.

For London's black population, the ever-growing gap between population and political representation leads to a spiral of little political representation, followed by disenchantment, followed by low voter registration and finally by the frustration of a minority unable to master its own destiny.

Too apocalyptic? Not according to a survey for *Time Out*, the London news and events magazine, of 18- to 35-year-old black people. It found last year that only half of those questioned were registered to vote and one in five would not turn up on election day. The reason for staying away was "they felt excluded from a white-dominated political process".

Interestingly when asked what would change their minds, nearly 45 per cent replied the strongest motive to vote would be "more black candidates".

The net result is that although more than 85 per cent of Afro-Caribbeans and 70 per cent of Asians cast their votes for Labour in the last general election, the effect is diluted because the reduced number of ethnic minority citizens likely to vote.

Why does this happen? In a word, discrimination. It is not just that white electorates are reluctant to vote for ethnic minority candidates, but party hierarchies stymie black politicians' progress.

This analysis was used to promote another minority - women in politics. The Labour Party introduced "women-only" short lists before the 1997 election and saw the number of female MPs rise from 63 to 120 last year. It was only stopped because the courts declared it illegal.

In the United States, a more radical move in 1990 was initiated by President Bush's Justice Department. Officials baldly stated that racism made it impossible for blacks and Latinos to get elected without help.

So a programme of gerrymandering was sanctioned - creating congressional districts with "minority majorities". It got results. The number of black Congressmen and women rose from 22 to 39 in 1992. Again the judiciary intervened and re-drew the boundaries.

Spin doctors may not prescribe them - but these bitter pills may be the only way to treat the electoral malaise of under-representation in London.

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طريق من الامم

Serb leader stokes fires of war in Kosovo

By Steve Crawshaw
in Glodjane

IT IS the same pattern, all over again. One destroyed house, and more badly damaged. Four Albanian dead, and one Serb policeman. Both sides blame the other and expect things to get worse. Another Balkan war is on the way.

In Bonn, the six-member contact group on Yugoslavia - Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Russia, and the United States - met to decide what to do about the exploding violence in the Albanian majority Serbian province of Kosovo.

They decided, in effect, that the answer was: not very much. Theoretically, sanctions will be imposed in four weeks time if President Slobodan Milosevic fails to initiate peace talks with Kosovo's Albanians. That hesitant proposal suggests the West remains as confused as it always has been about how to deal with the Yugoslav leader.

In the village of Glodjane, where the latest killings in Kosovo took place, the fire has been well stoked. Brutality begets bitterness, and determination. As you turn off onto the road that leads to Glodjane, 50 miles west of the Kosovo capital, Pristina, Albanian men greet you with victory signs, as though their battle with the Serbs was already won.



Watching brief: An ethnic Albanian boy in the village of Dubrava, 100km west of Pristina, capital of Kosovo. Last night there were clashes in the village between Serb police and members of the Kosovo liberation who are calling for independence

Photograph: Radu Sighed/Rauners

For others, there is no reason to feel victorious. Tractors and carts were leaving Glodjane yesterday, villagers fear a renewal of Tuesday's violence. Idajet and her husband Janos sat with their four children on a tractor. All they had was a change of children's clothes. They do not know when they will return. "What future have we?" asked Idajet. "None."

The course of events on Tuesday remains unclear. According to the Serbs, they ran into an Albanian ambush. The Albanians insist there was an unprovoked assault by the Serbs. The Albanians deny a form of guerrilla resistance movement is growing. The Serbs deny they use unlimited

brutality in an attempt to eradicate this Albanian infitida.

Glodjane and several neighbouring villages were deserted yesterday, except for roaming groups of visiting locals, who had come to inspect the damage for themselves. There was a curiously unsettled atmosphere as dozens of youths wandered through the empty villages and gazed at the damage done by the Serbs.

Some Albanians are keen to ensure the official Albanian version is all anybody hears. One remaining villager began describing Tuesday's events - including the hours of shooting and the Serb helicopters that landed outside his house. But a self-important man in a suit

was eager to prevent him giving his eye-witness account. The man in the suit held a furtive conversation, accompanied by emphatic hand gestures. Speaking freely to a foreign journalist was clearly not a good idea.

Serb headlines talked yesterday of how the police had "liquidated terrorists": the front page headline in the Albanian-language *Koha Ditore* listed the villages that had been attacked, like a role call of death.

These clashes seem certain to be only a foretaste of what is yet to come. Mr Milosevic unleashed Serb nationalism in Kosovo as a way of strengthening his power. The Balkan wars that began in 1991 have helped to keep him in power. Now, it may be Kosovo's turn.

There is a general expectation here - much stronger than ever before - that Kosovo is on the edge of conflagration. "We want freedom - or we want war," said one man in the old town of Pecs just a few miles away from the latest violence, yesterday.

The Serbs fear what might happen to them. But the Albanians are still more traumatised. "We live like dead people. We have nothing," said one Albanian in the village of Dubrava, where Tuesday's ambush was said to have taken place. "How can this go on?"

Doubts pushed aside as Emu gathers pace

By Katherine Butler
in Brussels

THE European Commission cleared the way yesterday for 11 countries to join the single currency in 1999 and eased the path for Britain to become the 12th.

Casting aside doubts about glaringly high debt levels, particularly in Italy and Belgium, Brussels confirmed that all the applicants for first-wave membership, except Greece, now meet the economic entry conditions laid down in the Maastricht treaty.

A special EU summit at the beginning of May is set to endorse membership of the Euro zone from next January for France, Germany, Holland, Belgium, Luxembourg, Ireland, Finland, Spain, Portugal, Italy and Austria.

The Commission's report makes it clear that membership of the Exchange Rate Mechanism is a pre-condition to joining Emu, but in a decision with significant implications for Britain, dropped its insistence that this must be for two years. Britain, which was ejected from the ERM in 1992, has disputed the interpretation of the rule on ERM membership, arguing that currency stability over time, not technical membership, is the key. While Yves-Thibault de Silguy, the EU monetary affairs commissioner, confirmed yesterday that formal membership of the mechanism is required, he did not specify for how long.

Jacques Santer, the Commission President, went further in explaining how Italy and



Jacques Santer: Concession to Italy and Finland

Finland were cleared for membership, despite having been in the ERM for less than the prescribed time. "Guaranteed stability of exchange rates prevailed over participation in the ERM for two years," he said.

The Commission claimed

in its report that EU economies have converged to the point where the Euro can now succeed.

Critics who claim the Maastricht criteria have been fudged to permit the realisation of a political dream will point to a separate report on convergence from the European Monetary Institute, the forerunner of the future European Central Bank.

The EMI praised overall progress, but singled out Italy and Belgium for criticism on failing to bring debt levels down. The EMI also raised doubts about the ability of France and Germany to consolidate their public finances.

In its own verdict, the Dutch Central Bank yesterday echoed concerns voiced in recent weeks by senior Dutch political figures about Italy. Its report concludes that genuine convergence, despite a healthy picture

in terms of interest rates, public deficits and inflation, remains fragile.

But supporters of Emu rejected claims that fudging, or the convenient conjuncture of economic cycles, had brought about the right figures on the day.

"This is the beginning of a new era. We are giving ourselves a monetary tool which will be one of the most important in the world" Jacques Chirac, the French President, said.

Mr Santer said the Commission had studied a range of factors to determine whether member states could stick to the tough fiscal disciplines they have achieved to qualify.

EU commissioner Sir Leon Brittan hailed the Commission's verdict as a powerful rebuttal to single-currency opponents. "At first they argued that the economic situation meant that Emu could not possibly go ahead on time and would have to be postponed: they have been proved wrong. Then they said only a handful of countries would be in a position to qualify: wrong again... today's report shows that the progress made has been so huge that no conceivable allegation of fudging can explain it away."

According to the Commission's assessment, all but Greece, of the member states who want to join in the first wave, have public deficits which are at or below the 3 per cent of GDP allowed by the treaty.

Debt in only four countries was below the 60 per cent of GDP target in 1997, but almost all have reversed the trend of rising debt, so qualify.

Currency approval

TONY BLAIR gave a clear signal yesterday that Britain will accept the findings of the European Commission approving 11 countries for joining the European single currency, in spite of it being attacked as a "fudge" by the Conservatives, writes Colin Brown, Chief Political Correspondent.

The report raised the possibility of Europe launching a "soft" single currency which the Tories believe threatens to drive the pound higher, and risk recession in Britain, and could lay down the battle lines between the parties for the general election.

Mr Blair expressed concern about the "very high level of the pound" for exporters, but firmly rejected claims by William Hague, the Tory leader, that the Commission report had "fudged" the debt ratios of eight of the 11 countries.

The Prime Minister told MPs: "There are a range of criteria to take into account. When we take our decision as president of the European Commission we will do it on the basis of the report."

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Nigeria attacked over press repression

By Nicholas von Herberstein

EVERY two weeks a journalist gets killed, and every three days a journalist gets arrested, according to the Committee to Protect Journalists. It announced yesterday that 129 journalists were jailed in 24 countries around the world and 26 killed in 1997.

The report targets Nigeria as the worst offender, which is holding more journalists than any other African country, in-

cluding prize-winning writer Christine Anyanwu. Although Turkey had released 40 journalists during the course of the year, 29 were still being detained. While the imprisonment of journalists sounds abhorrent, a fate far worse has befallen 26 journalists who have been killed in the pursuit of their profession.

Unlike a soldier who may be equipped to deal with violent situations, a journalist's weapon is the pen, though for the 26 journalists it certainly wasn't mightier

than the sword. "When journalists are murdered or brutalised, it is almost always by some government, some organisation, some criminal cartel, or some individual wanting to prevent the flow of embarrassing or incriminating information to the public," said Gene Roberts, chairman of the CPI.

"If the assassins learned that when they killed journalists, the inevitable result was that they got more coverage rather than less, the killings would subside," he added.

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Romans hurtle along tram-lines towards a chaotic millennium



Crush hour: Passengers (left) in close quarters on a No 8 tram, having queued for the dubious privilege (above). One of the villains of the piece is the Mayor of Rome, Francesco Rutelli (right), who found himself toasting an empty track last Saturday at the inauguration of the line, as it was still incomplete.

Photographs: Marucci Maurizio



IT WAS supposed to be Rome's dream machine for the Millennium. Not so much a tram as a flying carpet, a high-speed, hi-tech, electronic monster that would whisk 300,000 people painlessly from their commuter suburbs to the centre.

Nothing could go wrong, they said, since the tram would have its own dedicated track and pass every two to three minutes. So confident were the city fathers that they cancelled half a dozen buses that used to ply the same route, declaring their excess to requirement. Even the traffic lights would turn green on command, thanks to some smart computer technology.

Andrew Gumbel finds the Eternal City on a one-way road to ruin with a hi-tech transport system that failed to deliver

The town planners who cooked up this scheme forgot one thing. This is Rome, a city where nothing can be taken for granted except chronic urban dysfunction. Three days into its existence, the No 8 tram from Casalotto in the western suburbs to Largo Argentina in the heart of the old city has suffered four serious breakdowns, fallen way behind its ambitious schedule, mashed pensioners, babies and invalids into an indistinguishable human pulp and provoked the beginnings of a popular revolution.

"Off with their heads!" yelled a middle-aged woman amidst the mayhem on inauguration day, directing her anger at the mayor, the head of the bus company - anybody she could think of to blame. "Don't treat us like cattle, resign!" echoed half a tramload on Tuesday, their mouths wriggling about for air above the crush like shipwreck survivors fighting to stay afloat.

It did not help that traffic around Largo Argentina has been completely redirected to allow passengers alighting from

the tram to make onward connections. The square has turned into a seething mass of angry commuters, jammed cars and buses unable to negotiate the ludicrously tight bend into which they have all been stuffed.

This disaster has been a long time a-coming. The tramline was supposed to have been finished for last November's mayoral elections, but got held up when the Culture Ministry insisted at the last minute that the route be surfaced with cobblestones instead of plain asphalt.

It was too late to use real cobblestones, since the tracks had already been cemented in. An exasperated Rome city council was forced to order fake cobblestone tops no more than a couple of inches thick and, when it turned out the job could not be done locally, it had to subcontract the job out to Hong Kong.

A new inauguration date was fixed for last Saturday, but the mayor, Francesco Rutelli, found himself toasting an empty track since the line was still incomplete.

When the service finally started at 6am on Monday, there were no jumbo super-trams ready (the bus company had to use old rickety ones instead) and no "smart" traffic lights, just the usual dumb ones that obstinately turned red instead of green when the tram approached.

The ticket machine at Casalotto refused to give any change, forcing honest passengers to roam the district in search of an open bar. Pedestrians paid no attention to the tram whatever, forcing drivers to slam on the

brakes and send heads crashing against the window-panes.

As a result, the journey time for the full stretch almost doubled from the projected 20 minutes to nearer 40. Time and again, the trams got so full the doors could not open and one of them gave up the ghost near the education ministry in Trastevere. "Hey Mr Mayor, give us back our buses!" they shouted as the mechanics vainly played with the emergency switches to try to kick the tram back to life. Actually, the passengers' wish has been granted.

A desperate city council has put four buses on standby on their old route down Viale Trastevere in case of delays while the bus company struggles to prise open the doors of the No 8.

None of this bodes well for the year 2000, when up to 30 million pilgrims will flood into town for the Vatican's millennial Jubilee. Apart from the super-tram, Rome has no significant infrastructural improvements to offer. A plan to build a new metro line beneath the centre fell through, as did a tunnel that would have burrowed under the Castel Sant'Angelo. Fasten your seatbelts, folks, it's going to be a bumpy ride.

The kids were screaming

Why do small white boys do



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French Right anoints Blair

By John Lichfield
in Paris

TONY BLAIR is a Gaullist. This was the drift of the friendly, low-key French media reaction yesterday to the Prime Minister's speech to the National Assembly.

There was praise for Mr Blair's French, and excited comments from right-of-centre French politicians, claiming him as one of their own.

The Left was reserved, even frosty. The Socialist Prime Minister, Lionel Jospin, felt the need to quibble with Mr Blair on one point. Mr Blair told the Assembly that ideology was dead: there was no longer a left or right-wing way of running an economy, only a good way and a bad way. No, said Mr Jospin, there were still good and bad left-wing policies and good and bad right-wing policies.

Le Monde, the left-of-centre newspaper, gave Mr Blair's visit only a short story at the bottom of an inside page. The British Prime Minister had, the paper said, "got up to speak with the delighted smile of a child" discovering the glacial splendour of the French parliament for the first time.

But the paper praised Mr Blair's "perfect French" and welcomed the fact that he had

given a detailed defence of Blairism, and had not mouthed the traditional empty phrases.

Le Figaro, the right-wing daily, was the only paper to put Mr Blair on the front, under the headline: "The sound advice of Tony Blair". Asked what he thought of the speech, Jean-Pierre Chevènement (radical socialist and interior minister) said in English: "I admire his French." Paul Quilès, a Socialist former defence minister, was more damning: "Usually people who announce the arrival of a new world are either naive or disturbing."

The centre-right's uproarious approval of Mr Blair's address owed something, no doubt, to a release of tension after a week of in-fighting on the French Right over local alliances with the National Front. But right-wing parliamentarians could not hide their joy yesterday at what they imagined to be the discomfiture of the Left. Pierre Lehoucq, a Gaullist and right-wing thinker, said: "It was very amusing. It was a fine lesson in Thatcherism, addressed as much to the French Left as the French Right... truly, it was a delight." Patrick Devedjian, a rising star of the Gaullist RPR, said: "In English, New Labour is a bad translation. It really means RPR."

Papon trial halted by wife's death

THE JUDGE in the trial of the accused Nazi collaborator Maurice Papon yesterday adjourned the proceedings for five days following the death of the defendant's wife of 65 years. Mr Papon's lawyers said a verdict in the nearly six-month-long trial was now expected next Wednesday.

Before the delay, a verdict had been due late tomorrow. Paulette Papon, 88, died of cancer at the couple's home near Paris. Mr Papon had left Bordeaux to return home as soon as he heard the news. He was driven by car in the middle of the night under police escort.

The 88-year-old Mr Papon, who served as Paris police chief and budget minister after the Second World War, is accused of ordering the arrest for deportation of 1,560 Jews including 233 children in 1942-44 when he was secretary-general of the Bordeaux region Prefect's Office and supervisor of its Service for Jewish Questions.

Proceedings were started against him in 1981 but were obstructed by senior government officials unwilling to see their country's unsavoury wartime past dragged into the open.

— Reuters, Bordeaux

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'The kids were sitting ducks ... they were screaming to be let back inside'

David Osborne reports on the day
carnage came to an American backwater

IT WAS 12.41pm on Tuesday when the normal happy routine at the Westside Middle School, just outside Jonesboro, was first interrupted. Fire alarms sounded throughout the school. Just as they had been instructed in numerous drills, the children, aged 11 to 13, got up from their desks, and, with their teachers, filed calmly outside the school's doors and began to line up on a narrow concrete walkway outside.

It was barely a minute later when the county sheriff's office got the first call - "Guns fired at Westside School. Come at once." By then, however, the horror was already under way. Pupils and teachers were falling to the ground, blood was spilling on to the walkway and on to the manicured grass on either side. Bullets zinged into the breeze-block wall of the gym, by the walkway.

Cutting the children and teachers down was a ruthless rain of bullets, coming from wooded higher ground just 100 yards away. The source of the gunfire, according to numerous witnesses, was two boys, standing on the bluff. Dressed from head to toe in camouflage gear - the kind that so many fathers and sons wear on hunting expeditions in the surrounding countryside at weekends - they were firing Rambo-style with an array of weapons, including high-velocity rifles and handguns. With an estimated nine guns between them, the pair let off 27 shots.

The panic was instant. But, unable to digest what was happening to them, some of the children at first believed the fire drill was being turned into a fun theatre event by members of the drama class. Only when the blood started to spill, did they begin to understand.

"Kids started clapping, they thought it was a play," 13-year-old April Stevens said later, "and everybody started running around". April is one of many small children still trying to grasp what happened in those seconds. And how close she herself came to being hit.

"I saw my friends go down and my teacher go down," she said. Holding her fingers just inches from her head she went on: "A bullet came right by me. It went by my ear and I heard

the sound of it." One teacher, Shannon Wright, 32, at that moment committed the most heroic act of the day. Seeing that one of her pupils, Emma Pittman, was directly in the line of fire, she stood in front of the girl to shield her. Mrs Wright, believed to have been pregnant, took the bullets herself and was fatally wounded.

What Mrs Wright did to protect the girl was described by another child, Amber Vanover. "This guy was aiming at her [Emma]. He was fixing to shoot her. Mrs Wright moved out in front of her. And she got shot. She died. I sat and watched her."

There was nowhere for the children to take shelter. This is a modern school, built only three years ago, and the fire-alarm system has a special feature: once the children are out of the school, all the doors automatically lock behind them. As the bullets kept coming, running back inside for sanctuary was not an option.

"The kids were sitting ducks," cried one mother, Tvy-la Clevinger, who was among the first of the terrified parents to come rushing in their cars to the school. "They were screaming to people inside to open up the doors and the guns kept going off."

The scar of Tuesday's killings will remain with Jonesboro for a generation, but the act of terror itself was brief. In less than four minutes, police and paramedic teams were streaming on to the sprawling campus, which also accommodates the local high and elementary schools.

The accused boys had begun fleeing into the woods and towards a white van parked several hundred yards away. As they ran, however, they were brought to the ground by sprinting police officers. The van was found to contain more weapons.

Back at the school the pandemonium continued. Children, rushing around in confusion, unsure where to go, found themselves witnesses to scenes of gore no adult would wish to see in their lifetime. So appalling were some of the injuries, even those who tried to treat them were still unable yesterday to speak about what they saw without their voices choking.

Paramedics and the surviv-



An emergency worker carrying a girl from an ambulance into Westside Middle School in Jonesboro, Arkansas, following the shooting Photograph: AP

ing teachers began herding the screaming children into the gym, the only building where the doors were unlocked. The walkway and the grassy area around it became an instant hospital unit. The dead were sorted from the injured. A few moments later the first of many ambulances arrived to ferry the wounded to St Bernard's hospital, where long-rehearsed public emergency procedures had already been activated.

By the evening when the first of the media satellite lorries began swarming into the area, the awfulness of the afternoon was already being tidied away. As police officials measured and tagged bullet holes in the wall of the gym, weeping school staff laboured with bleach and mops to remove the bloodstains from the walkway.

As darkness came, the first tributes to the dead began to arrive, bouquets of flowers, giant white ribbons and smaller ribbons and pins that by yesterday all of Jonesboro was wearing in mourning on dresses and jacket lapels.

Why do small-town white boys do this?

Mary Dejevsky in Washington tries to find a reason behind America's latest massacre

IS IT GUNS? Is it television? Is it America? Is it getting worse? Within hours of Tuesday's school shootings at Jonesboro in Arkansas the psychologists and sociologists were all trying to explain why two boys, one 11, one 13, might have dressed themselves in camouflage gear, armed themselves with a handgun and a rifle piece, and set out to shoot their schoolmates. It was the third multiple shooting at a United States school in six months.

These shootings do not fit the common preconception of violence in America. They did not happen in the often violent inner-city schools but in relatively small towns in the backwoods: in central Mississippi, in south-western Kentucky, and now in northern Arkansas. Although much violence in America is concentrated among blacks, these schools are predominantly white. As for those who think they illustrate a trend of increasing juvenile violence in the US, they are wrong: juvenile crime has started to fall in the last two years.

Nor are American schools necessarily violent. According to a study released last week, the incidence of violence in schools has changed little over 20 years.



Medics rest after helping Jonesboro victims Photograph: AP

Even excluding these explanations, the three school shootings have enough in common to give analysts material to work on. Noting that all the recent shootings took place in southern states, one Arkansas academic blamed "Southern culture" where guns were a fact of life, the right to carry arms was strongly defended and on public display, hunting was a common pastime, and children had easy access to weapons.

Others blamed lax parental discipline which gave children the idea they could settle disputes violently, and yet others lamented what they saw as stifling peer pressure in schools where 10- and 11-year olds are already dating and, as apparently in this case, wreaking vengeance for favours spurned.

And while juvenile crime may be falling, the level of violent crime among psychologists said: "Now kids have access to money, drugs, alcohol and

weapons. Things have changed, and they have the opportunities to do these horrible things."

Surprisingly, perhaps, the standard explanation after such multiple shootings - that the young perpetrators were inordinately influenced by films, television or violent videogames - has been heard less than on previous occasions. Although many American parents seem concerned to the point of paranoia that their children should be sheltered from violence and sex on television or the Internet, there is growing recognition that second-hand violence does not automatically foster violent behaviour.

Several experts noted that the perpetrators in all three recent shootings seemed to be loners, with some latent predisposition to violence or past problems in schoolwork and socialising.

"Normal kids," said one yesterday, "don't do this."

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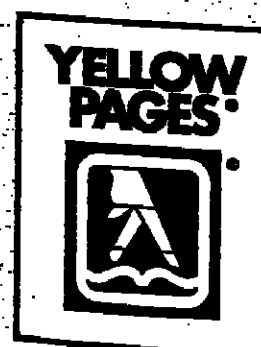
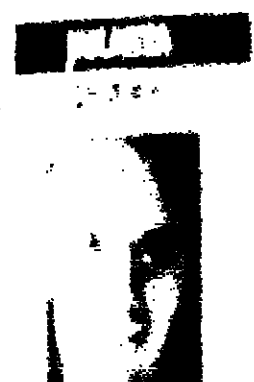
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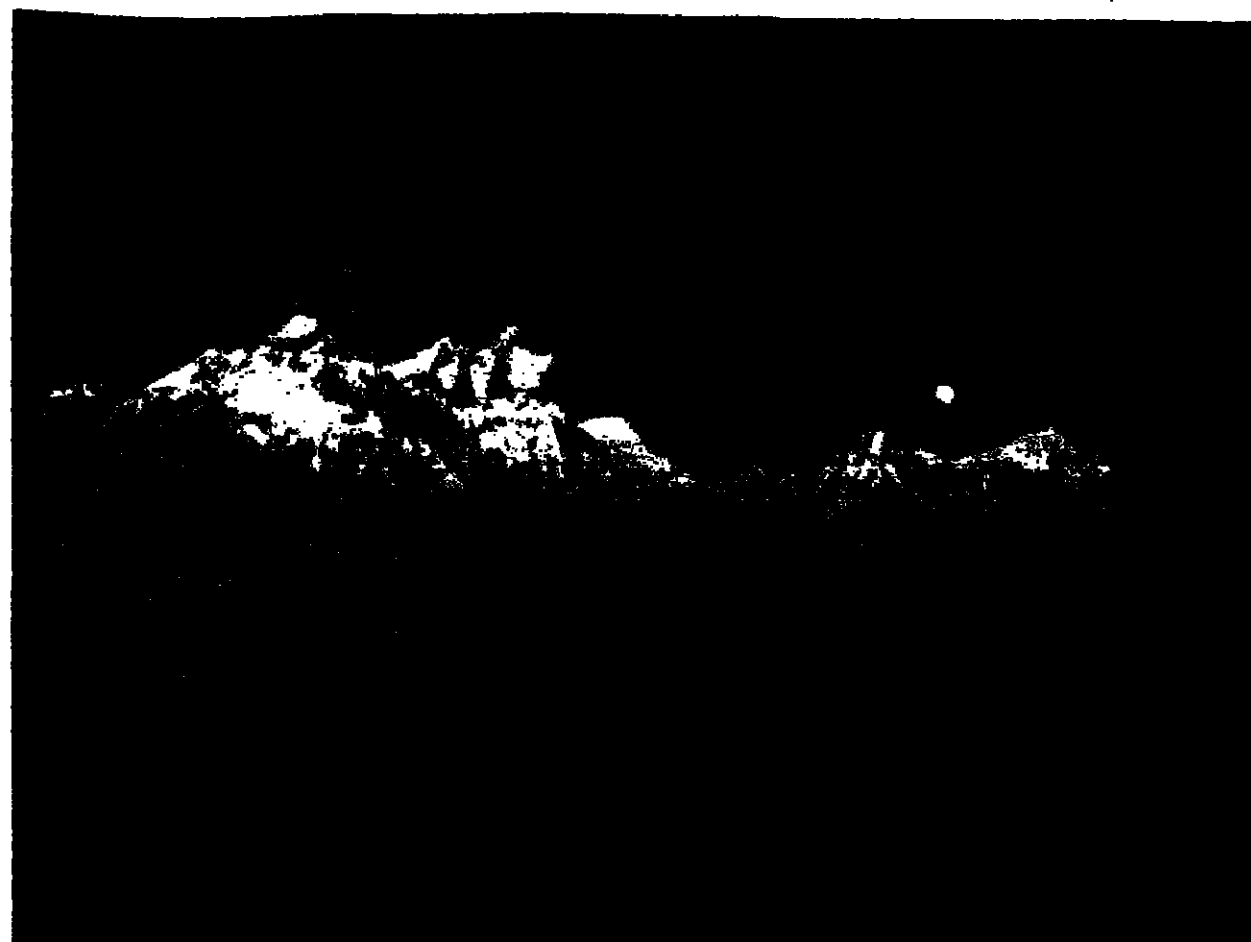
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Top of the world: Himalayan peaks including Everest in a scene from David Breashears' documentary, Everest. The film was made in the Imax format in May 1996 when 10 people died on the mountain. Photograph: Robert Schauer

Sent to the mountain with garlands and blessings

KATHMANDU — Mountain guide Dave Walsh is smiling again. "I've just found the instructions for the tent — they're in Italian." In the sun-filled yard of a Kathmandu hotel, loads are being prepared and equipment checked ready for despatch to Everest Base Camp.

To those unfamiliar with the Himalayan expedition scene, like myself, it looks like frantic chaos. A Nepali is busy stitching tent material on a treadle sewing machine; Kit Spencer, the expedition's agent in the Nepalese capital, is demonstrating the safety harnesses to be worn by porters high on the mountain and scores of barrels are being lined up ready for packing.

Meanwhile, there's been a hitch on the bureaucracy front. The satellite phone which will keep us in touch with home for the next 10 weeks needs a



STEPHEN GOODWIN
Everest Diary
Day One

licence. So, at this late hour, it has had to be handed over to the "ministry" which gets the paperwork in order. Dave's deputy guide, "Barney" Barnicot, summed it up while checking the fit of a client's crampons. "It's going to be a monster day," he said before rushing off to deliver the phone to the bureaucrats.

Despite all this, both guides are confident that the show will be on the road — or rather in the air — on time in the morning

when we — Himalayan Kingdoms Expeditions (South Col) team — are due to make the 45-minute flight to Lukla and begin the long walk to Everest Base Camp.

The team is made up of three guides and seven climbers who have each paid up to £30,000 for the chance to climb to the highest point in the world.

It is an international group — five Brits, including myself, three Americans, a Canadian and an Irish woman. All from different backgrounds and with varied mountaineering experience, we are just beginning to get to know each other. Conversation is light, if slightly probing. It seems a friendly bunch, which augurs well, but it will be important to bond the team before it meets the testing conditions on Everest. We have also been joined by another Canadian who will trek with us as far as Base Camp — itself no mean feat since the camp lies at a higher altitude than Mont Blanc.

Thankfully, we will be lightly loaded. Much of today has been spent packing gear into those 60-litre blue plastic barrels. The expedition has 40 of them, most of which will be carried to Base Camp on *dzhos*, a hybrid yak. Each hairy beast will be loaded with two barrels.

Shortly after our arrival at the appropriately named Sum-

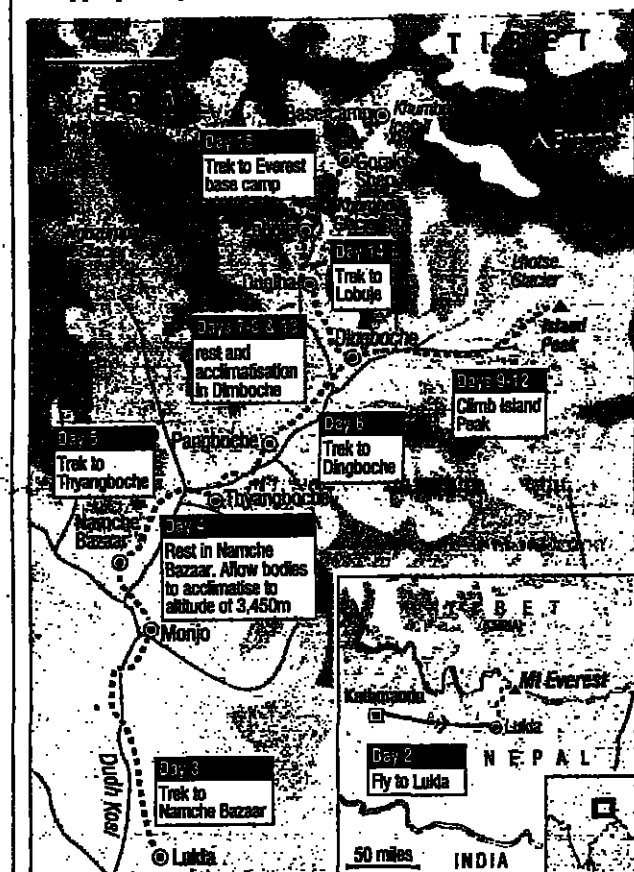
mit Hotel in Kathmandu, we were invited to a *puya*, a blessing ceremony which is intended to bring good fortune to the expedition. Rust-red *alka* was daubed on our foreheads and a garland of yellow and red flowers hung round our necks. We drank tiny bowls of *rakshi*, a strong-tasting rice wine, and ate saffron coloured eggs, or *phuls*.

Similar blessings will be bestowed on our approach to the mountain. Perhaps it is a ceremony that cannot be repeated too often. Even by our proposed route via the South Col, the most popular way up the mountain, climbing into the thin air of Everest remains a hazardous business.

When I was buying high-altitude gear a couple of weeks ago at Outside, a specialist shop in Hathersage, Derbyshire, the assistant Andy Kirkpatrick remarked that "Climbing Everest is like hill walking, only...". Then he tailed off. Only what? Only bigger, or perhaps "only more deadly".

However we won't have to wait until the mountain for some scary stuff. That begins with the flight to Lukla. This stony airstrip is little more than an inclined terrace on the hillside, making landing or take-off at Lukla one of the most terrifying experiences in passenger aviation. I can't wait.

Steve Goodwin's next report will be tomorrow



King conspiracy 'evidence'

CORETTA Scott King, the widow of civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr, wants an investigation into possible new evidence that her husband's assassination was part of a conspiracy. A former FBI agent said yesterday he has papers that could help verify claims by James Earl Ray that a gunman named Raoul set him up to take the blame for killing King in 1968. Donald Wilson said yesterday he took papers from Ray's car when he impounded it after King was killed. Ray pleaded guilty to killing King in 1969 and was sentenced to 99 years in prison, but later recanted and has been seeking a trial ever since. — AP, Atlanta

Legendary boast

BULGARIA'S former Communist strongman Todor Zhivkov compared himself to a legendary national hero yesterday and said that if he decides to get back into politics again, "nothing can stop me". Mr Zhivkov, 86, ruled Bulgaria from 1954-89. "They [the people] are looking for a strong leader again like Krali Marko" — a mythical warrior revered for fighting Turkish invaders centuries ago. — AP, Sofia

German gun haul

GERMAN police confiscated machine guns, rifles and over 8,000 rounds of ammunition yesterday in a raid of right-wing extremists. — AP, Koblentz

South Korean attraction

COUNCILLORS in Kangnung, east of Seoul, planned to start building a museum today to display as a tourist attraction a North Korean submarine which ran aground in the area in September 1976. — AP, Seoul

Pilgrims arrive at Mecca

ABOUT 600,000 Muslims so far have arrived in Saudi Arabia to perform the annual hajj at Islam's two holiest sites in Mecca and Medina. The pilgrimage will reach a climax in the first week of April. — Reuters, Dubai

Help for dancing bears

THE World Society for the Protection of Animals is asking tourists to help stamp out the practice of turning bears into dancing attractions in India by refusing to give money to the bears' owners. — AP, New Delhi

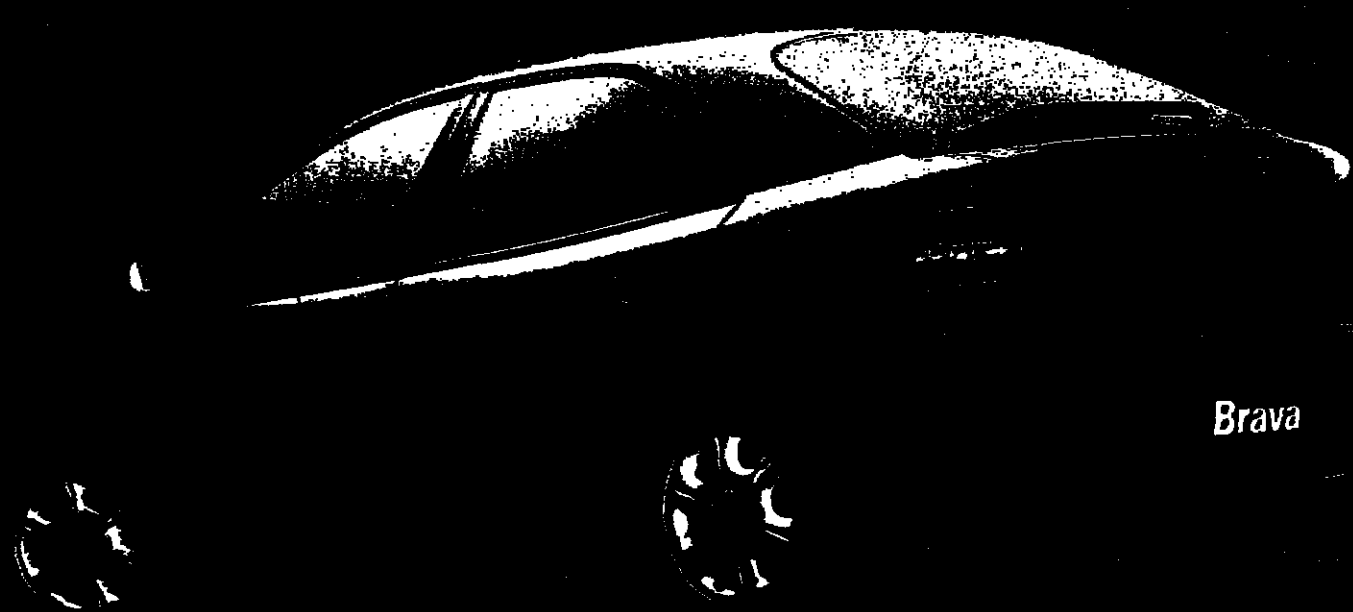
Pardon for lesbian

A WOMAN jailed for two years for "tempting a woman for having sexual relations" was released yesterday after receiving a presidential pardon. Mariana Cetinar was convicted in 1996 and sentenced to three years in prison. — AP, Bucharest

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The curtain comes down on Labour's end of pier show

The party's national executive has decided to abandon kiss-me-quickville, but Blackpool is 'real' and its heartbeat is old Labour, says Paul Routledge

OH NO! Labour is saying goodbye to Blackpool, the only genuine seaside resort left (excepting Scarborough). In a fit of middle-class pique, the party's national executive has decided to abandon kiss-me-quickville in favour of fashionable Brighton or boring Bournemouth. Chic Blackpool ain't, but it is the real thing. People who actually work for a living, and those who just wish they could go there in their millions every year, and have a damn good time. As my dear departed friend, Bill Martin, of the *News of the World*, once defined the place, it is Candy Floss and Torn Knickers. New Labour just wouldn't understand that.

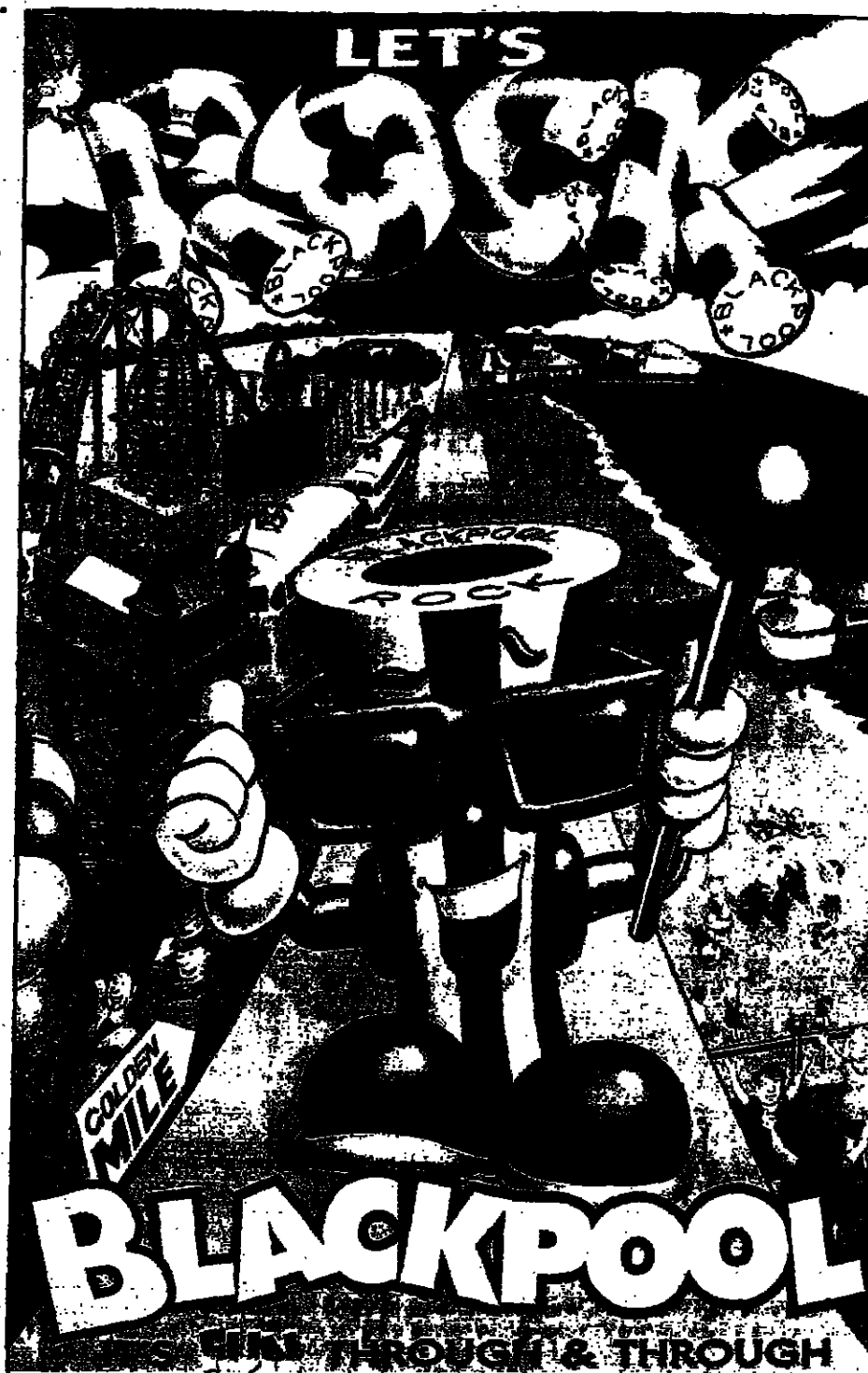
I have been going to Blackpool for Labour conferences for 30 years, and though it changes, the resort's great virtue is that it stays the same. The Winter Gardens are a Victorian delight, brightly-coloured tiles and millions of lights like an indoor illumination to match the proper one on the seafloor. And those dingy, cavernous bars! You can make your hungover way into these places at eleven in the morning, thinking a quiet sort will revive your spirits, only to find the brothers have already beat you to it. In the further corner will be a craggy-faced trade unionist from from Clydeside, taking a hauf 'n' hauf, and explaining the mysteries of composing motions to an adoring first-time delegate he met at the engineering workers' "function" the night before. There's nothing like that in Brighton or Bournemouth. More likely, you will be dragged into a focus group to explain how wonderful the great leader is.

Of course, the journey is half the fun. The south coast resorts are too close to get a good session going on the train, but many a policy has been made or broken on the long grid from Euston to Preston. The

train is always late, but as you approach Blackpool, through stations in the Fylde with names like Kirkham and Wesham, the first sight of the famous tower stirs old sentiments. Back again! Today, it will be gossip, gossip, gossip in the ample lobby of the Imperial Hotel, properly studied with comfortable chairs, where many a late night sing-song has ended with the police being called. Tonight, it will be a *rencontre* with Dr Thwaites' Restorative in the seedy Empress, where Tony Blair (when he was nobbut employment spokesman) was notoriously invited to mate elsewhere by those rough boys, the industrial correspondents of the national press.

For Blackpool is nothing if not ruthlessly egalitarian. Where else can you be called a cheeky bugger by a waitress half your age over breakfast in your hotel? And speaking of hotels, grasping though they are, the hoteliers are discretion itself, as long as you don't make too much noise. Past Labour conferences have been adultery on wheels. In Blackpool, it's surprising the sheets don't snap in half when the chambermaid makes the bed. New Labour's morality inspectors have obviously been at work in this week's deplorable decision. Even the hookers have a sense of humour. One journalist fast asleep in the Imperial was awoken by the noise of a lady of the night clambering into his second-floor bedroom from the outside fire escape. He remonstrated a little, so she threw his shoes out of the window.

And it isn't true that there is nowhere to eat. As well as having the finest fish and chips outside Yorkshire, Blackpool has some very good restaurants. Nothing on the south coast remotely compares with Robert's Oyster Bar, with plain wooden seats, magnificent views of the North Pier and the Irish Sea and wonderful sea



food. It is also the only decent BYO eatery this side of Australia. You buy your crate of chardonnay round the corner and quaff it over a long lunch with a couple of MPs and the delegate from Frome.

Brighton doesn't have trams. It doesn't have Tedley's or Boddingtons. It doesn't have a tower, or a pleasure beach, or mucky postcards, or a decent Trades and Labour Club.

At best it's a museum of working-class taste and hasn't bothered to change since the Fifties - even the chip fat is the same, says David Walker

OBAN may be darker, Rothesay wister, Bournemouth dearer, Torquay harder to get to - and in Eastbourne the geriatric count is certainly higher - but among seaside towns Blackpool takes the biscuit as the all-round worst place to come, visit or confer.

And in Blackpool's case, it's a Garibaldi - stale, anachronistic and fly-blown. Cool Britannia, it isn't. It's not even attractive in a masochistic, *nostalgie de la boue* sense.

At best, it's a museum of working class taste. Here is a resort which acquired an identity in the days when a mill-hand from Oldham could have a paddle, drink six pints of Banks's, have a piddle, eat fish and chips and still have change from half a crown. It has not bothered to update since - even the chip fat is the same. Only the prices have changed. Blackpool traders always were great gougers.

You don't have to be Richard Hoggart to notice that if, once, Blackpool's vulgarity was urgent, and its pleasures the fierce, gaudy, urgent pleasures of people with all too little leisure, nowadays it floats in a cultural no-man's land of plastic tat, entertainment that is second-rate even by the standards of day-time television, and catering which does not seem to have registered the arrival on these shores of McDonald's.

To be anti-Blackpool is not to be anti-North. Scarborough is a fine resort, with a dramat-

ic setting, fresh sea food and bracing air. Even poor old Morecambe can boast of more - that magnificent marooned ship of the Midland Hotel, those magical sunset views across to the Lakeland peaks.

To be anti-Blackpool is not even to regret - as Nye Bevan used to regret - the poverty of working-class imagination. Working people have, since the late Fifties, travelled abroad, and come to expect professional standards. But when they come to the Fylde coast expectations seem to sink to zero.

The problems start on the front. Rough or smooth, the Irish Sea at Blackpool is always turbid. Beneath the murky float unspeakable things. Blackpool does not have sand or mud, but something oozing, shifting and indefinitely else.

Along the front stretch, for those interminable miles between Lytham and Fleetwood, like the repeating pattern on the wallpaper which Blackpool landlords all seem to buy from the same stockist, the same shopping parades of chip shop, burger bar, amusement arcade and discount retailer, lit by "illuminations" swinging wildly in the October gales.

ning seem somehow to have been suspended. Houses seem either makeshift, unpainted or ineffably chintzy.

After a day on the prom, visitors retire to bedrooms which were last decorated in 1959. Nylon counterpanes sit on nylon sheets. As the watery light filters in through nylon curtains, you rise as the smell of bacon fat wafts through the corridors. Yoghurt and muesli are not on the breakfast menu.

As for the conventioners, the fact is Blackpool rarely even recognises there is a big, sophisticated world out there, beyond hiking prices to metropolitan levels for party conference week. The Tories never dared complain - in public at least - for fear of seeming snobbish. But the blunt fact is that even in those hotels which charge as if they merited three or four stars, standards are poor. Blackpool is the kind of place where to order the International Herald Tribune is to be greeted with a blank face; where the telecommunications revolution (requiring space for laptop in hotel rooms let alone a few extra telephone sockets) has not happened; where waiters seem always to be work experience youths who have learnt the completely unnecessary art of wrapping a napkin round a wine bottle, but cannot serve a Dover sole to save their lives.

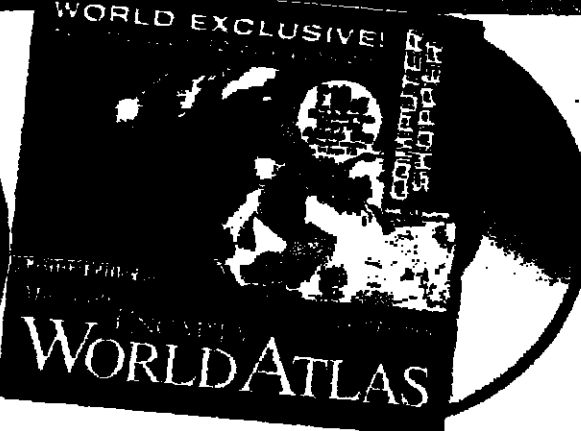
And all they say about the difficulties of getting there are true. By road, the M6/M56 junction is often impassable. By rail the journey involves huddling at Preston in a two-coach diesel which always seems overate and seems to take an age to get past Poulton.

If Tony Blair is serious about remaking party allegiance in Britain, let alone remaking Britain, he could hardly do anything of greater symbolic importance than decamping from Blackpool.

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Blackpool: a user's guide

■ The Labour Party conference brings £5m to the town. Each year Blackpool hosts 400 other conferences which bring in a further £50m.

■ There are 3,000 hotels, guest houses and self-catering establishments which can sleep 100,000 guests in any one night - almost doubling its resident population of 150,000.

■ The most popular tourist attraction in Britain is the Blackpool Pleasure Beach with 7.5 million visitors a year.

■ The beach is home to the tallest, fastest and steepest roller coaster in the world. At 235ft high the 'Pepsi Max Big One' reaches speeds of 85mph during a two-minute trip which puts riders through a 3.5 positive G-Force.

■ The Blackpool Tower, which cost £70,000 to build, opened in 1894, stands at 519ft 9in. It attracts 1 million visitors a year. It is lit with 10,000 bulbs.

■ The Blackpool illuminations light up a six-mile stretch of the coast with 500,000 bulbs costing the town £1.5m a year to run.

■ 10.5 million sticks of rock are sold each year.

—Michael Greenwood

Spies left out in the cold

The Iron Curtain is gone, but the trade in secrets is flourishing as never before. Nicholas von Herberstein explores the twilight world of modern espionage

WHEN five Russian spies were caught in Norway just a few weeks ago, it took plenty of people, not least the country's prime minister by surprise. Surely, said premier Kjell Magne Bondevik, this sort of conduct no longer took place in 1998 in a democratised Russia? Wrong. The notion that espionage is on the brink of extinction is naïve to say the least. Despite the collapse of the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact, the spy trade has not faded into obscurity. The reality is that the industry is as active as ever, with billions of pounds being funnelled into the budgets of various agencies around the world.

Just how active spies still are has been made apparent in recent weeks with a series of embarrassing blunders. The worst case involved Mossad, the Israeli Intelligence service. Once regarded as the élite of the spy clubs, feared by its enemies, it was responsible for two bungled assassination attempts, one in Jordan and one in Switzerland, which have led to the resignation of Danny Yatom, the head of Mossad, and the blushes of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government.

The Russian spy ring in Norway was uncovered as the five members of FSW (formerly the KGB) attempted to get their hands on top secret Nato and Norwegian documents. Norway is the only Nato member state that borders Russia, and the region is home to Russia's vast northern fleet, yet despite an "era of mutual co-operation and understanding between Russia and Nato", some organisations, it seems, have not received the message.

According to Dr Ken Robertson, lecturer in terrorism and intelligence at the University of Reading, a crucial factor (certainly in the case of Mossad) which contributes to these failed operations, is a lack of clarity. "Where the organisation does not have a clarity of purpose, and is not agreed on what kind of security is necessary for the state, for instance, if they are divided over the peace process, then that can make the whole organisation very factional. Organisations that are characterised by factions on the whole are less effective," he says.

"The most damaging aspect to Mossad is was this myth of its near invincibility," says Dr Robertson. "With that myth destroyed, Mossad will find top-level recruitment a little more difficult."

The Russian security apparatus certainly can't be described as having a clarity of purpose.

So swift are the changes in its leadership that today's head of foreign intelligence is tomorrow's best-selling author on the £10,000-an-hour lecture tour.

There is, it seems, an odour of incompetence amongst the agencies that gives credence to Hollywood portrayals. Stumbling around in the dark, they fight budget restrictions from their own governments, get blamed for failures by those same governments, face an ever-increasing sophistication and technological evolution in their opponents, and receive no recognition for the missions that succeed.

Britain does not escape unscathed from humiliating incidents either. Last year MI5 held a very public recruitment drive, with advertisements for staff placed in the national press for the first time. It led to thousands of applications to a phone line. Phone Hackers, or "phreakers" broke into the line with a new message indicating the demise of MI5. "Hello, my name is Colonel Botch. I am calling on behalf of the KGB. We have taken over MI5 because they are not secret any more and they are a crap organisation. All the details left will be forwarded to the KGB. Thank you."

(In fact, the quality of the candidates was, to a large extent, not high enough to justify the man-hours involved in wading through the applications).

Despite the recruitment drive, British intelligence, like the secret services of many other western countries, has suffered from budget constraints following the end of the Cold War. Its funds are dispersed between MI5, MI6, and GCHQ. Those holding the purse-strings clearly did see a valid reason for cutting funds, although the cuts have not been limited to the extent one might have thought possible. But what many observers believe is that the cuts have led to bungling – as witnessed by recent events.

The end of the Cold War has also led to a change in *modus operandi* as well. With the collapse of the former Soviet Union, the situation has become so confused that reliable intelligence information is only possible by getting people on the ground to report back, rather than using satellites or other forms of technology. The countries involved in espionage have also changed. A recently released document by the United States National Counter Intelligence Centre reveals that, overall, activities have increased. "A number of countries pose various levels of threat to US information. Some are traditional adversaries,



Out of the shadows: Hollywood's portrayal of the spying game is not too wide of the mark Photograph: Kobal

while others are long-time allies of the United States, or have traditionally been neutral," the report stated.

Louis Freeh, the director of the FBI, has told the United States Senate that at least 23 foreign intelligence services were actively targeting the United States. "I think that Russian aggression has been unabated even in the post-Cold War. It is escalating. It's a serious and continuing problem. Recent espionage cases involving Russia, South Korea and China are just the tip of a large and dangerous intelligence iceberg."

The area of responsibility for spies has also changed markedly since the end of the Cold War. International crime and terrorism, money-laundering and nuclear proliferation occupy the time of agencies

far more than mere military and intelligence data acquisition.

However, a far more serious threat than the traditional espionage activities is the sudden rise in economic espionage by foreign governments. The CIA director, George J Tenet, outlined five key challenges facing the intelligence communities to the US Senate select sub-committee on Intelligence. "At the top of the list I place a set of trans-national issues that threaten the lives of all, while also threatening strategic interests in important ways. These issues include proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, international terrorism, drug-trafficking, information warfare and the fallout from the recent Asian financial crisis."

Indeed, two weeks ago, the FBI called for an increase of \$93m for its computer crime unit, with a total budget increase for the fiscal year 1999 of \$3bn.

"We do see an increase in foreign economic espionage due to an increasing reliance on technology and commerce, as well as the value of intellectual property," said Lesley Wiser, head of overseas espionage in the Eurasian sector of the FBI Counter-Intelligence Division. "One of our priorities here at the FBI is to identify economic intelligence activities of foreign governments in the United States and to neutralise those activities," she said. "We are spycatchers, and economic security has become part of the National Security Agenda."

Stars' children pay the high price of fame

PITY Sir John Hall, the reluctant returning chairman at Newcastle United, back on the board at St James' Park after the Toon-gate scandal toppled his son Douglas. Douglas Hall and Freddie Shepherd finally jumped from their posts as chairman and vice-chairman before they were pushed by several thousand irate Geordies following revelations of their cocaine exploits with Spanish prostitutes and boasts of ripping off fans.

Sir John is not the only famous daddy to be experiencing a reverse of the old adage "the sins of the father will be visited on the son." As actor Dustin Hoffman partied at the Oscars in Los Angeles this week, his 32-year-old step-daughter Karina faced imprisonment in a British prison for stealing cheques worth £5,358 from the Cambridge company where she worked. In mitigation the court was told Karina had always felt intimidated by her father's wealth and fame.

The list of self-destructive, wild-child offspring of celebrities is a long one. From the death by heroin overdose of Olivia Chanon, daughter of the former Tory minister Paul, to the suicide of actor Paul Newman's son Allan, life as the child of a superstar would appear to be a curse rather than a blessing.

Professor Petriska Clarkson, a consultant psychologist and author specialising in the study of fame, says behind the glamour the children of celebrities often have a rough deal. "They are constantly on display and never really seen for who they are," she said. "Other children will say: 'you're so and so's child,' and from that moment they cannot take any of their human relationships for granted. The child will find it very difficult to know whether people really like them or if they are just trying to get some reflected glory and get close to the famous parent."

Dirk Flower, a Harley Street psychologist who treats children of the rich and famous, said they respond to their parents' fame in one of three ways: rebellion, abuse of their parent's position a la Hall, or success – Stella McCartney for example.

Too often or not though the path is rebellion – experiments with drink and drugs, unhappiness and even death. The ultimate example is the Brando family. In 1990 Marlon Brando's son Christian was sentenced to 10 years for killing the lover of his pregnant half-sister Cheyenne. Cheyenne's baby was born a drug addict and she never recovered from the trauma, committing suicide three years later at the age of 25.

Professor Clarkson says the high instances of suicide and the numbers of drug and alcohol addicts among celebrity offspring are a result of the child's inability to deal with their parent's fame. "They can't be bothered to engage anymore so they give up or become drug addicts."

The pattern is an old one. In 1957 Sarah Churchill, daughter of ex-Prime Minister Winston, was arrested in Los Angeles on a charge of drunkenness and fined \$50.

When the children of celebrities do err, the world is quick to hear of it. Professor Clarkson asks for sympathy: "I would ask that people be gentle with them, because everyone has made mistakes."

Rosa Prince

Get on with your life – don't dwell on the past



VIRGINIA
IRONSIDE

An anonymous woman is worried that despite the fact that when she was 14 her brother often came into her room and had sex with her, and that her uncle was a dirty old man who tickled her in unpleasant places, she has a wonderful marriage, sex life and children. Will these past events come back to haunt her later?

IT'S COMMONLY assumed that anyone who has been groped or flashed at in childhood has been abused and that suddenly, in later life, they'll be haunted by dark dreams, overwhelming depression and a feeling of disgust and low self-worth. This will continue until they face the original trauma, re-experience the feeling of powerlessness and resultant anger, when they can then start to rebuild their lives. The view has become so strong that now people like the anonymous woman who wrote to me can actually become anxious if she doesn't feel deep shame, guilt and horror at what has happened. Is she repressed? Worse, is she living in (ghastly word) denial? Or is she simply insensitive to life's horrors, nothing more than a cold fish? Or perhaps she is an exceptional woman, a woman of a hugely strong character who has somehow managed to deal with a dreadful event, whatever "dealing with it" might mean. My feeling is that she is none

of these things. She is just an ordinary woman with as much resilience as most of us, who has, again like most of us, been through a few mildly unpleasant experiences in her teens, and thought nothing more about them.

Child sexual abuse, if it is violent or penetrative or non-consensual, can sometimes have frightful effects in later life. Not always, but often. But most children are exposed to a variety of fiddling and groping by men as they grow up, and think no more of it than a slight wave of fear and revulsion.

I was hugged and kissed by a horrible old *Evening Standard* salesman when I was about eight. My father threatened to throw a bucket of water over him. The fact that my father never actually even had words with the man was far more unsettling to me than the unpleasant grab in itself. Creepy men used to follow me when I walked back from school and one friend of my parents used to take me out to tea and un-

der the table at Fortnum & Mason would guide my hand up his thigh and on to his crotch. I never said anything and although I used to rather dread this part of the tea I used to enjoy his talk and the cakes enough to be willing to go along with it for a few months at least. I certainly can't feel that, compared to all the other ghastly incidents that we all have in our lives, these were more than mere annoying blips.

If I were the woman who wrote to me I would put my worries aside completely. Her brother felt sexy; she didn't mind going along with it; he never threatened her or told her it was their little secret, there is no more nor less to this incident than that.

She's lucky, she's happy, and she's utterly, utterly normal.

WHAT READERS SAY

Gropers and flashers were childhood occurrences that didn't upset me unduly then or now. I feel embarrassed when I think what went on with my older brothers (although we stopped short of intercourse) but I put it to the back of my mind and can face them very politely when we meet.

I don't think this will catch up with you or me – we are lucky enough to be resilient, to have a busy, happy family life and to have been able to grow up from it without melodramatic interventions. — *Anon*

From what you tell us (and we do not have enough details to be certain), although you and your brother broke society's rules, it seems that what he did was loving and tender and it does not sound as if it was either exploitative or degrading.

I read your letter and was, frankly, profoundly envious.

When I was a teenager my brother never even touched me. Instead he exuded self-righteous, evangelical piety, and having failed to convert me to his religion, shunned my company.

I felt dreadfully abandoned and let down, all the more so because my father was hopelessly neglectful and unaffectionate. He was also very adept at using my desperate, embarrassed desire for love to get me to do all manner of things that no father should ever ask of his daughter, although sex was not one of them. I dealt with my misery through anorexia and then bulimia, which dominated my life from the ages of 14 to 28. I was so hungry for love and affection that I let men abuse me, not daring to hope for anything better.

The proof of the pudding is surely in the eating. You are apparently a fully functioning, happy adult. At 35 I have a history of unhappy relationships, no marriage, no children, and am only just beginning to make something of my abilities at work. To the tabloids you would

be "a victim of abuse" and I would have had "the slimmer's disease". This simplistic labelling is not only patronising, it is inaccurate and misleading. — *Anon*

The hardest thing you have to face is that what happened to you was wrong, not of you, but of those who exploited you and who led your brother to do so. You have taken the biggest step, in recognising that what happened in your family is not acceptable. It has harmed you, even if only by making you think that it was okay. Now you need to see that this kind of behaviour repeats itself, from generation to generation.

Your brother is now your children's uncle. Can you protect them from a repeat of your own uncle's behaviour to you? Perhaps your brother has realised that what went on at home was actually abusive, and worries, as you do. If so, he could be your ally. If not, he is a danger to your children. They may never forgive you, if you fail them. — *Sara Clarke*

NEXT WEEK'S DILEMMA

Dear Virginia, My mother of fifty three has been diagnosed as having cancer. I have talked to the doctor privately and he says she only has between three months and eighteen months to live, but he thinks it is best not to tell her this as he feels she will lose the will to fight. Has anyone else been in

this situation? I feel my mother should be told the truth, even though she is not a very strong character and has a tendency to depression. I hate to feel I am deceiving her. — *Nina*

Letters are welcome, and everyone who has a suggestion quoted will be sent a bouquet.

from Interflora. Send comments and suggestions to Virginia Ironside at the Features Department, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL (fax: 0171-293 2182), by Tuesday morning. If you have a dilemma of your own that you would like to share, please let me know.

Can a better diet prevent cancer?

To find out more, read our special report, Making Gains, on Wednesday The EYE

THE INDEPENDENT

cancer research campaign

Stars' children
pay the high
price of fame



Restoration piece: 24-carat-gold angels (above), their hands turned down to renounce worldly vanities, inside the Albert Memorial (above right) Tom Pilsen/English Heritage

Albert returns in all his glory

PRINCE Albert has languished in a black bin liner since 1990 when the scaffolding went up on Kensington's Albert Memorial. The first to get a sneak preview of the restoration work will be Chancellor Kohl of Germany during the ASEC Summit for European and Asian Heads of State. He's in for a big surprise. Queen Victoria's beloved husband, two and half times taller than life size, is gold

in true Gothic revival style. John Foley's statue of Albert depicts him in his Knight of the Garter outfit, which is rather Blackadder-ish, with pantaloons and ruffles. His forefinger marks a page in the catalogue of the Great Exhibition of 1851 which Albert inspired. The money raised was spent on the nearby South Kensington museums.

Restoration work only began in earnest in 1994 when English Heritage chairman Jocelyn Stevens became involved, thundering that it was scandalous to let go to ruin such a "gloriously extrovert piece of sculpture".

English Heritage committed £2 million towards the restoration, and the Department of Culture, Media and Sport £8.2m. Ready a year ahead of schedule, the project has come in nearly £3m under budget at £11.2m, with £750,000 sponsorship already in the bag and a further £250,000 sought.

A combination of time and London's dirt served Albert badly. Lead wrapped around the over-engineered cast iron structure, caused it to corrode dramatically. Fine craftsmanship has been helped by new technology to restore it. The waterless sponge jet system, pioneered for the nuclear power stations, was used on the iron, and the first laser cleaner installed in this country for the lead.

Restored to its former glory, Gilbert Scott's Gormondghast fantasy and Prince Albert's pragmatism in patronage are in step with the spirit of our times. Chancellor Kohl would call it "zeitgeist".

Nonie Niesewand



plated once again, while the blown glass cabochons in ruby and turquoise on the orb and cross atop the monument sparkle in the sunshine.

The memorial to Albert, who died young of typhoid in 1861, is, as English Heritage project manager Alasdair Glass put it, "the British equivalent of the Taj Mahal, a love story in Portland stone and iron".

Gilbert Scott designed the shrine to the Prince Consort like a tiered wedding cake, spired to nearly 200 feet, and vaulted with flying buttresses

The office — it's a place to relax

Arthur Andersen's sixth floor offers a glimpse of how tomorrow's workspaces will be designed. Meg Carter reports

THE NINETEIES have seen a virtual revolution in office design. Information technology has enabled a radical re-think, with forward-looking organisations turning their backs on personal desk space in favour of more flexible working environments. Early adopters of this new credo were London-based creative businesses: advertising agencies, design consultancies and the odd PR company. Now, the ripples are spreading further afield — among the latest converts is management consultants Arthur Andersen.

At first glance, Arthur Andersen's central London head office at 180 The Strand is, to say the least, underwhelming. A concrete office block, the building houses some 3,000 employees across up to nine floors in five connected blocks. Built in the mid-Seventies, it has been fitted out by the firm in bristly efficient (if drab) light wood and pastel shades. A traditional cellular structure means that numerous small, self-contained offices ring the building's exterior, while lines of window-less cubicles and load-bearing columns run down the centre of each floor.

Visit the sixth floor offices of Arthur Andersen's Business Consulting division, however, and prepare for the shock of the new. The floor has been gutted and an imaginative work environment introduced, complete with "Chaos" (action), "Zen" (quiet) and "Touchdown" (temporary working) zones, flashes of bright colour and free-standing illustrated panels. A coffee bar and other new meeting areas have been fitted with novel design features, not only to intrigue but to cater for the latest multimedia technology. Oh, and there is a liberal scattering of fish tanks.

The redesign was inspired by the changing nature of the company, explains Christi Franchise, director of organisation learning and exchange for Andersen's business consulting

division. "It is a physical manifestation of where we are going in business," she says. "It is specifically designed to get different people in different teams collaborating — to foster new and more creative relationships by positioning people around each other."

Out have gone intimidating boardrooms in favour of intimate "conversation areas" to overcome "the negative them and us ethos", says Ms Franchise. And movement of staff — and clients — throughout the entire area has been drastically re-thought. Some of the floor's few internal dividing walls curve, some fold back to reveal new space while others incorporate portholes or fish tanks to create new perspectives.

The design creates different moods in different areas, says Lydia Ney, senior designer at BDG McColl, Arthur Andersen's consultants. Visitors step out of the lift onto the floor at the "Hub", or reception area, where they can use the latest multimedia equipment. Opposite them are windows which extend across the entire length of the building overlooking The Strand. Along this runs the "Touchdown Bar", a narrow lip of workspace where staff are encouraged to sit at stools, plug in their laptops and phones and work for short periods of time.

Bright and airy, this area also serves as an informal corridor between the "Chaos" and "Zen" zones, which occupy opposite ends of the floor, to the left and the right. Back towards the rear of the building, away from The Strand, the mood quietsens with other work areas. No employee has their own office, although senior partners are allowed their own desk. As everyone works on laptop computers, the idea is that you work where you feel most comfortable — either with other members of your project team or to suit your mood. Staff have their own stylishly



Work experiences: Plug in your laptop where you feel most comfortable John Voos

designed lockers — large enough to store work and computer when not in use. Navy and pale green banks of these units have been zoned into groups under different place names, ranging from Antwerp to Zurich (taking in Blackpool along the way "for fun", Ms Ney says). These are supplemented by "Bam Walls" — additional storage

areas ordered by topic, where project materials are stored. At one end of the floor is the "Chaos" area designed for group work and informal discussion. This is semi-partitioned from the rest of the floor by illustrated screens depicting a knot of cables and wires in vibrant red. All furniture and equipment is lightweight and on wheels, so the

space is constantly changing. The area also includes three brainstorming rooms — one red, one blue and one green — inspired by Edward de Bono. The idea is that you use the red room to energise a meeting at a slow time of the day. For a quieter, more calming environment, blue or green is advised.

At the opposite end of the

floor is the "Zen" zone — again divided by panels, which this time depict pebbles, sand and palm fronds in quiet hues. In this area, signs chant: "No meetings. No phones. No interruptions." It is space for quiet reflection (and, of course, fish tanks).

Technology has been the driving force throughout. Not only did Arthur Andersen want to incorporate the latest in PC and multimedia-ware to impress its clients, it also wanted to inspire staff. So, interactive white boards on the walls can be downloaded to laptop computers and infra-red transmitters will shortly enable staff to pick up TV, audio and corporate presentations from monitors positioned around the floor.

The net result is more efficient use of available space and a more effective, motivated workforce, claims UK projects manager Dean Smith. The old layout had room for 95, the new one accommodates up to 170 with 103 desks available at any one time. "An inherent problem in this building has been that we've lost meeting rooms as we've grown," he says. "This structure frees up more space — nine out of 10 meetings can be conducted in an informal area."

Three months in and the department has truly bedded down. "We have seen communication increase dramatically," says business consultant Abigail Clifton. "It's easier now to sit and share information with people from other groups within the department. It's noisier, but there is far more interaction."

Of course there were some reservations. "When you go from a cellular office to open plan, people always remark on the noise and loss of privacy," Mr Smith admits. "Hot desking" can make people insecure. Even so, junior and senior staff adapted quickly. And even middle managers, whose initial resistance was fuelled by seeing hopes of their own future fiefdom fade, are finally coming on side.

Once, the regimented structure of the traditional office reinforced the corporate hierarchy. The office of the

Nineties, gurus claim, is demolishing traditional structures. And they are right — up to a point. True, Arthur Andersen Business Consulting staff now relish their new found flexible working and lead its break with tradition with everyone sharing the same space. But it is interesting to note that while Arthur

Andersen intends to re-design other departments, none will be as radical as here. Which, of course, will create an altogether new form of "cellular" structure — with Business Consulting set clearly aside from Arthur Andersen's other departments. Divide and rule lives on, then, in a far subtler form.

INDEPENDENT

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London? Sorted

"OI GUV I see you're an Independent reader. Tell you what, you might be interested in this..."

"What?"

"I had a bloke wants to be the new mayor of London in the back of my cab."

"What was he like then?"

"Well guv, he combined all the qualities you need in this new post, being possibly the second most politically important person in the land. He was fashioned from an alloy of human qualities rarely found at the top of even our national political life."

"Gosh. What were they then?"

"Well, for starters, he's a right show-off. I thought to myself, here is someone who has the sheer vulgar appeal that means instant coverage whatever he does. A self-publicist who doesn't really have to try too hard. Maybe he occasionally gets into scrapes, if you know what I mean. A bit like Jeffrey Archer in that respect. But nothing to detract from the important job of speaking clearly for the capital here and abroad. A global voice, no less, I'd say. But he's not just an internationally famous populist elected by a method that gives him a clear mandate."

"Really?"

"No, there's another thing. He's got a vision for London. Now I've been around a bit and I can tell you that at just over seven million, London has the largest population of any major European city and, with a GDP of going on for £100bn, if London was a country, its economy would be as big as Portugal's. Not a lot of people know that. Now that's a big city and it needs a big vision. So he's got to know what he wants and concentrate on one or two key objectives. Just like that geezer in New York."

"Rudolph Giuliani?"

"Yeah, that's the one. You see, what he did was to concentrate on crime. And now New Yorkers feel safer and have much more self-confidence about themselves. I mean, I can remember when the place went bust. So the right man in the right job can make a difference, see?"

"Well, quite, yes."

"Going on holiday this year? Me and the wife went to Barcelona for ours. That's one hip and trendy place. They've had a few powerful – and effective – mayors. They got the Olympic Games a few years back. There you go. But London needs more than hip and more than PR. What we want is, excuse my French, a bit of radical social reform. And you used not to get much of that round our way. I mean, lots of well-meaning remarks, of course, but really nothing concrete. My idea of a good mayor is someone who has the determination to use the influence and resources – maybe £4bn he'll have to spend – available to really make a start. He can get the new London development authority in and tell them what's what. Now while he's sorting that out the second thing he wants to do is – hang on! Blackwall Tunnel! Now we're in trouble... Look, berk in a Merc... P*** off – yeah. As I was saying. Get an integrated transport policy. Plenty of scope there with the possibility of adding congestion charging to existing methods of finance like adjusting the local government precept – the council tax to me and you. Getting people out of cars and into public transport and of course that could be good news for us cabbies as well. And something else, talking about mayors. Ever been to Birmingham?"

"Yes, actually..."

"Yeah all those blokes polishing their Sierras eh? Now, don't get me wrong, it's no dump and they've done some good things. But, really, they want a mayor too. And Liverpool. And Manchester. In fact any city that wants to try new leadership and tackle the seemingly intractable problems of urban decline needs one. Besides if London's got one, you don't want him to hog all the limelight, and dosh, do you? They should go for it."

"But going back to this Mayor of London. He's not just a man of vision and the rest. He's got charm, political skills and brains. A bit like Ken Livingstone you might say in that regard. But our man's able to deal with politicians of all complexions, old Labour, new Labour, Tory, that other lot Paddy whistansane, you know what I mean? Don't get me wrong, you want someone where you know where he's coming from but you think, 'Yeah, he can work persuasively with others, he can pull a few strings, he can mesh together the wide range of interests like business, the boroughs all those new bus and train companies.'"

"Now, I'm no mastermind but I could see that that man, he really had that intellectual quality, know what I mean? Impressive bloke. At the same time he's able to mix it if people try it on. He's quite able to stand up to those buggers who run the country. No messing about. You could imagine Frank Dobson doing that a bit. Right. Here we are. House of Commons. And don't I recognise you? What did you say your name was again?"

"Er... Tony."

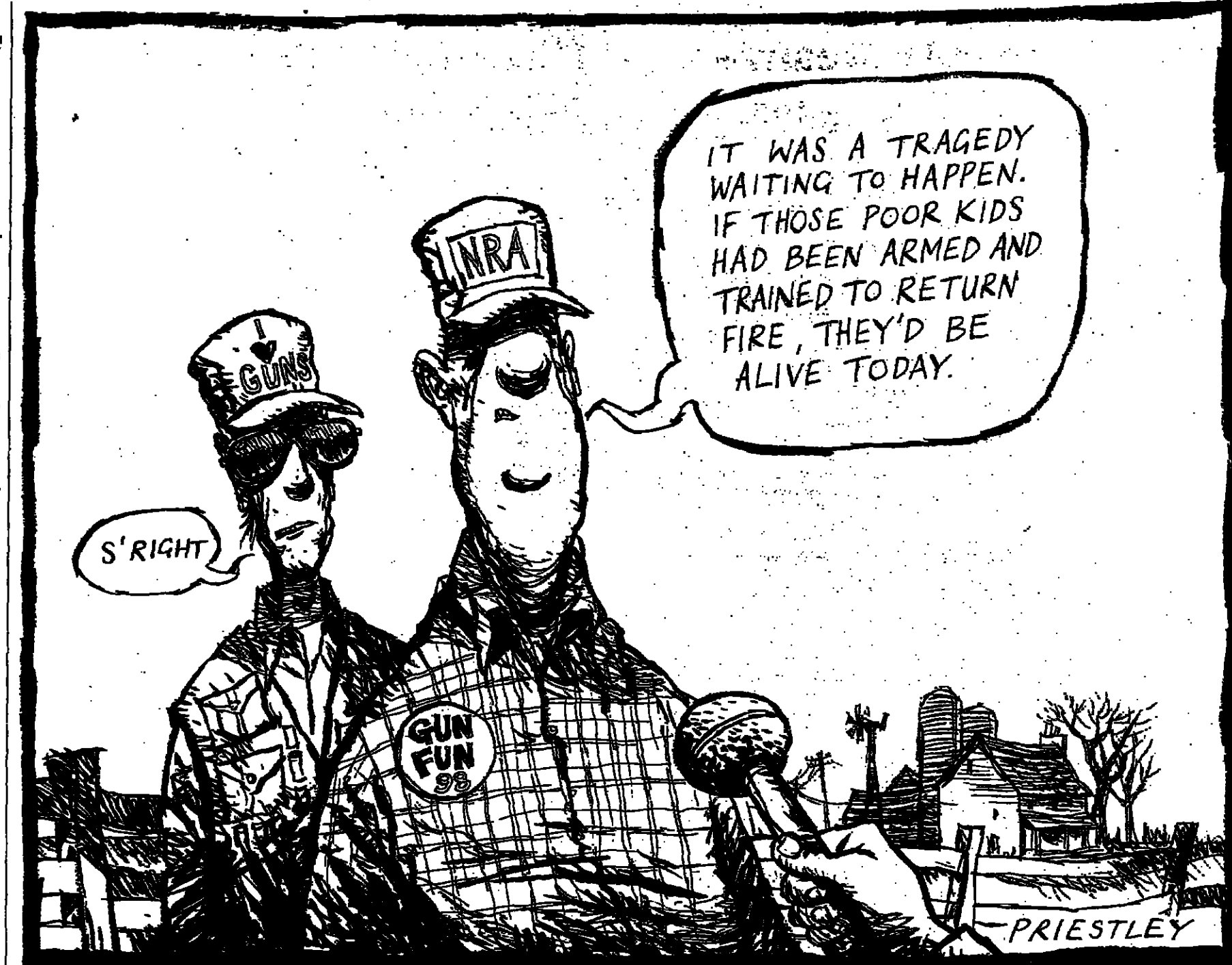
"Pleasure... Oi! where's my tip?"

It's just not cricket

WE live in an age when stereotypes are crumbling daily, especially in sport. Nowadays the Italians play rugby – and creditably. Irishwomen who traditionally were not encouraged to be sporty now win athletics world championships. English football clubs are black and foreign in impressive proportions.

We mustn't go too far in suggesting old patterns no longer hold. Nick Hornby may have convinced some that football is for sensitive types, but recent antics on Tyneside have cemented football's reputation as a pitch for boozing men. Perhaps there are real limits to how far traditional allegiances should be subverted.

There is something, well, outlandish about certain countries playing certain games. Take cricket. To know that there is a Bangladeshi side which is doing some international touring this summer is not surprising. But who are the Bangladeshi tourists playing in July? Scotland. The idea of Scots playing cricket invites one of those Doctor Johnsonisms about women, preachers and dogs. There is no reason why the Scots should be able to handle this particular ball except... it's English.



Standards for lobbyists

FRAN ABRAMS is right to raise concerns about the rapid influx of wet-behind-the-ears, ex-Labour researchers to the ranks of the lobbying industry ("Revealed: Labour's links with lobbyists", 24 March).

However, businesses need input into the political process, and more experienced advisers can play a vital role in ensuring that an organisation's corporate strategy does not simply ignore the nuances of emerging public policy. There is a clear difference between experienced, strategic advisers and those who trade entirely on their "links", such as they are.

There must also be a clear divide between the functions of an objective consultant and that of a party fund-raiser. Lobby firms must not become clearing houses for party political funding. That is a lesson Labour must take on board.

New Labour needs its own Greer scandal like a hole in the head. The lobbying industry can play its part by sticking to the Association of Professional Political Consultants' Code of Conduct which is committed to absolute transparency, and ethical standards in public affairs consultancy. JOHN MCLEOD
Director
Shandwick Public Affairs
London EC4

Parents work too hard

CAROL SAVAGE is out on a limb when she says that she is "happy to work a 12-hour day", starting at 8am and finishing at midnight, stopping at 5pm to put her son to bed ("Inflexible employers 'driving women out of Britain's workforce'", 23 March). She claims that long working hours split between the office and home is the sort of "flexibility" employers should offer professional women who have children.

MSF is a trade union with 400,000 members working in professional and skilled occupations in the private and public sectors. Those with children need to be able to effectively balance their time spent on paid work and working for their family. Many par-

ents want to be able to rearrange, even reduce the hours spent on paid work.

Doing paid work until midnight assists neither the employer, whose employee will not be productive at that time; nor the working parent, who will be exhausted. Transferring the macho, ineffective, long hours culture from the office to the home is no answer. Parents need to be able to balance time effectively, not juggle an overload in working hours. ROGER LYONS
General Secretary, MSF
London EC1

Children in care

WE loudly applaud Patricia Morgan's revelations and analysis of Britain's adoption system ("Social workers 'biased against adoption'", 23 March), if not all the recommendations for change. But, oh dear, oh dear, what of the reaction of such prominent bodies as the Association of Directors of Social Services and the British Agencies for Adoption and Fostering? They do nothing more than accuse, in familiar patronising manner, the accusers of being simplistic and misunderstanding the true nature of modern adoption.

There have been many other reports, including the Department of Health's own, that have condemned the current system for failing society's most vulnerable children. How refreshing it would be if the ADSS and BAAF came up with some plans and proposals themselves for improving the lot of children in care rather than staying locked into that old standby which I believe is known as "denial" in social services circles. LIV O'HANLON
Director, The Adoption Forum
London SW8

LETTERS

Post letters to Letters to the Editor and include a daytime telephone number
Fax: 0171 293 2056; e-mail: letters@independent.co.uk E-mail correspondents are asked to give a postal address. Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

Church investments

INVESTING in the arms trade (report, 23 March) raises many ethical issues for churches.

Under international law it is recognised that there are legitimate uses for arms in terms of self-defence, as set out in Article 51 of the UN Charter. However, arms are not like other goods. They are designed to kill, injure and threaten. Church investment guidelines are often more scrupulous about investment in firms producing alcohol, tobacco, or even newspapers, than weapons.

Armed conflict is one of the main obstacles to development. As a development agency, Christian Aid would ask its supporting churches to look again at the consistency of preaching peace and investing in arms.

Many of our partners in situations of post-conflict reconstruction stress the Biblical message of turning "swords into ploughshares". In this context Christian Aid would welcome a rethinking of church investment policies. The guiding criterion must be that the life of the poor in areas of conflict must take priority over a high rate of return on investment in engineering and electronics firms, whether or not their business is wholly or mainly arms for export. JENNY BORDEN
Acting Director
Christian Aid
London SE1

I MUST correct the impression given by James Savage's letter (25 March). The policy of the Church Commissioners is to invest in companies which have regard for employment practices, corporate governance, the environment and human rights, as well as their shareholders.

In our experience, these companies produce a good investment return and we have beaten independent benchmarks in recent years. Our policy is also to avoid investments in companies whose main business is in armaments, gambling, "blacklist", tobacco, and newspapers, where we have specific ethical concerns.

The Commissioners do not invest in British Aerospace and have never done so. ANNE DICKENS
Head of Communications
The Church Commissioners
London SW1

It's not that far

BRIAN LANG, Chief Executive of the British Library, writes (letter, 23 March) that "a researcher's work would be considerably hampered by the need to trail back and forth across London between separate buildings housing the range of references being consulted".

The distance between the British Museum and the new library is, at most, three-quarters of a mile. I hope Mr Lang's bibliographic knowledge is better than his geographic. BARRY COLE
London EC1

Drink, for safety's sake

SO nearly a third of Scottish pedestrians hurt in traffic accidents had been drinking ("Drunk pedestrians", 25 March). Will we now hear calls for a new offence of walking whilst under the influence of drink or drugs? Would it be statistically safer, perchance, to imbibe until one loses the capacity to walk at all? PETER ANDERSON
Llandrindod Wells,
Powys

Blair needs Blackpool

LABOUR's decision to abandon Blackpool ("Labour rocks Blackpool", 25 March) displays all the prejudices of Little Islington – abandoning the North, the working class and the whole notion of a party with individuals and trade unions making collective democratic decisions through annual conferences.

Nothing illustrates more clearly the social snobbery of this elite, breaking all links with those who brought them into office. This tiny unrepresentative section of upper middle class opinion thinks it can run the country the same way it runs the party. But Blackpool can do without Blair more than Blair can do without Blackpool. JOHN NICHOLSON
Manchester

Suing for distress

DR LEOPOLD FIELD (letter, 20 March) warns against accepting the Law Commission's proposals on liability for psychiatric illness and anticipates an "absolute flood" of psychiatric reports claiming that friends and relatives of the victims of accidents are suffering from "some form of psychological illness", which will result in an increase in insurance premiums.

The Law Commission report anticipates a 10 per cent increase in the number of personal injury claims at an increase in premium cost of 2.5 per cent (based on discussions with the Association of British Insurers). To describe this as a "flood" is emotive. To suggest that the legal profession is the true beneficiary is insulting. CHRISTOPHER HOUGH
London WC2

Citizens of Britain?

YOU ask if British children should be taught how to be citizens (leading article, 24 March). This is clearly a waste of money while we are all condemned to be subjects. DAVID WALKER
Sittingbourne, Kent

The place to go for a crafty smoke at the Millennium Dome – the designer backside



MILES KINGTON

TODAY, we continue our award-winning off-beat series:-

Very Unusual Jobs Indeed
Number 43: The man who is designing the back door of the Millennium Dome.

He is, perhaps, the only man in the world who describes himself as a Posterior Designer. He firmly believes that the back of a building is the most honest part of it.

"By your back doors ye shall know them." That is the motto that should be written over the entrance to every school of architectural design", he says. "Anyone can design a façade. Everyone can clean up the front of a building. Any fool of an architect can make the front look good, by clearing all the mess round to the back. So when I want to know how good a design concept is, I don't look at the front. I go round the back. That's the REAL side of the moon..."

The speaker is Otto Kerek, who has been put in charge of the backside of the Millennium Dome. He has never designed the front of a building in his life. He doesn't want to. All he wants to do is to do clever things with the other side.

"I think I first became fascinated with the backside of buildings when I grew up in the country and noticed that there was always one area of every farm which was different from all the rest. It was the secret, hidden place where they dumped the machinery that broke down. Know what I mean? A farmer has a tractor which grinds to a halt and won't go but is too good to throw away, so he puts it in the backyard waiting for a day when he can tinker with it. That day never comes. Instead, it is joined by a car, or a trailer, or an old caravan, which also will be mended one day. That day also never comes. Pretty soon there is one part of the farm which is looking like a rusty agricultural museum. That was the bit of

the farm that always fascinated me!" When Otto Kerek started getting interested in buildings, he maintained his interest in the dark side. The kitchen and refuse arrangements of great houses... the backstairs areas of palaces... the stage door areas of theatres... even the forgotten parts of churches...

"People think that churches are too holy to have a backside. Not true. Go round the back of most churches and you find shabby garden sheds, strange storehouses, mysterious entrances to the vestry, even forgotten loos... I found one church the other day where the vicar had had a TV lounge built on the back. Turned out he had a bit of a horse gambling problem, and used to sneak down there to watch the horses he had backed run on TV."

Wasn't that an expensive hobby? "Not really. He made quite a lot of money out of it. Sheer luck. Or, as he claimed, divine intervention. God used to show him the winners."

So, how does he envisage the backside of the Millennium Dome?

"Well, it's going to be difficult, because the kind of backside I like best are those that have grown accidentally, organically, and obviously if I design it from scratch it will be a designer backside. But what I am going to do is latch on to the habit which has grown tremendously in the last ten years: the habit which has transformed the image of the back door: in other words, the habit of slipping out the back for a quick lag."

You mean... you're going to design the back of the great Millennium Dome as a place where people can have a quick crafty smoke?

"I most certainly am. Smoking will be forbidden inside the Dome itself, for all the usual and boring reasons – health, safety, etc – so the back of the Dome will be the only place left for the nasty, normal side of life. Every large building you go past these days has a knot of guilty peo-

ple standing outside taking a quick smoke, so I thought it would be great to build on this late-20th century phenomenon and have the first designer smoking area. I'll make it comfortable, I'll make it smart, I'll equip it with cigarette vending machines, I'll have fresh coffee on tap and video machines playing clips from great old films in which Bogart and Bacall are constantly lighting up cigarettes... And there will be signs saying: 'Non-Smoking Forbidden'."

Won't there be a huge protest from all the health and politically correct people? Otto Kerek smiles. "Let's hope so," he says. "We back door people will take on anyone. Remember my motto..."

You mean, 'By their back doors shall ye know them'?" "No," says Otto. "That's my other motto. The one I mean, is, I feel fine, and I'm out of line, because I design where the sun don't shine..."

Kenneth Monkman

"NOTHING odd will do long, *Tristram Shandy* did not last," said Dr Johnson. Byron, Richardson, Goldsmith, Smollett and Horace Walpole were equally critical. But Garrick early recognised Sterne's genius. So did Bishop Warburton, a severe critic than Johnson. Old Lord Bathurst, Pope's patron, paid him compliments, as did Lords Rockingham and Spencer. He was illustrated by Hogarth, painted for the Duc d'Orléans, imitated by Diderot and adored by Wilkes and Charles James Fox. He was to be Burns's "bosom companion", as to many others since.

No one has ever been able to explain the inextinguishable attraction of Laurence Sterne, a delight that transcends time and geography. Kenneth Monkman did not try: seeing no need to justify his hero, he took all this for granted: the ups, the downs, the faults, the genius, were all part of that unique Shandyism. And Shandy Hall – "shandy" is Yorkshire for crooked – was the name Sterne gave to his Yorkshire home, the house to which Monkman devoted half a lifetime of love and restoration.

It all started in 1963 when he visited Shandy Hall at Coxwold and saw what perilous state it was in. A medieval house with a chimney that defied the law of gravity, it still preserved the elegant veneer – a Georgian facade to the garden outside, some nice painted panelling and one of young Mr Adam's cast-iron grates within – that Sterne had given it. But only just – it seemed about to tumble down any minute.

Over the next four years the Laurence Sterne Trust was formed, with John Oates, incunabulist and Sternean, and William Rees-Mogg, city editor of the *Sunday Times*, as trustees. Captain Wombwell, who owned Shandy Hall, set the seal on it by making the property over to the trust on condition that it raised the funds necessary to repair it. J.B. Priestley wrote a foreword to the appeal and money began to come in.

Help came from an unex-

pected, if characteristic, quarter. Laurence Sterne rose from the dead. That is, the graveyard in Archery Fields in which he was buried, by Hyde Park in London, was excavated by the Church Commissioners, and a skull – alas, poor Yorick – found, which (carefully measured by Monkman) proved to correspond, in its unusual length and narrowness, with the sculpted head by Nolkekens. It was re-interred, with due ceremony, in the churchyard at Coxwold, and Monkman was photographed, beside the transplanted tombstone, in all the papers.

Rescuing Shandy became a national cause, and by 1972, in record time, the house itself was safe. One fine day in April that year, Frank Muir made one of his inimitable speeches to declare it officially open.

But that was only the beginning, as far as Monkman was concerned, and here we must take a turn, like Corporal Trim's stick, and go backwards. He was born in Carlisle, where his strict Methodist father was a banking inspector, and there found his first schooling. The path then takes another turn, for while his father was posted back to Harrogate, he went to Rydal School in Wales. That, however, led to Leeds University, where, improbably, he read Chemistry.

Due to illness he never took his degree, but turned to journalism and the *Yorkshire Evening News*. This brought him into congenial, rather Bohemian, company, and in particular to friendship with Francis Butterfield, a painter of real talent (too little recognised today). And he, in turn, introduced Monkman to *Tristram Shandy*. It was a gift that matured slowly, to be repaid only recently in a moving memoir of Butterfield. This recalled, too, the days of good Yorkshire beer and last trams home, of art, theatre and letters – abruptly ended when Monkman ventured a disrespectful piece in the paper on the twelfth of August and the ritual carnage of grouse. The proprietor had other views on the subject, and

Monkman found himself on the road to London.

J. Walter Thompson was his first port of call, but in 1940 he joined the BBC News Department as a scriptwriter on *Radio Newsweek*, essential listening in wartime Britain, and the lifeline to truth heard in a whisper under the pillow in occupied Europe. The BBC was to be Monkman's career, producing and writing scripts, for 30 years, but his heart lay elsewhere. The seed sown by Butterfield began to germinate. He read the rest of Sterne, and then all the books about Sterne. That led to the books that Sterne had read, and that to the places where such books might be found.

Chief among these was the bookshop, not far from where he lived in South Kensington, of Peter Murray Hill, the D'Artagnan of booksellers in the grey post-war years. There he found others, Eric Bligh and Arnold Muirhead, who knew the byways of 18th-century literature too. He began to collect all the books he needed, and newspapers, too, in which Sterne's first writings appeared and the events of his Yorkshire youth were recorded. Prints and pictures followed, with other things that Sterne mentioned or might have had. The collection grew and outgrew the house in Clareville Grove.

But by now Monkman had seen his vision, of a Shandy restored and filled with what Sterne would have had around him. Briefly married after the war, in 1956 he met and in 1959 married Julia Bearder, and it was with her that in 1970 he moved into Shandy Hall, still in the throes of restoration. Together, over the last 30 years, they made the vision reality. Windfalls came their way: a medieval wall-painting found beneath Sterne's panelling, the French porcelain cow that Sterne had bought on his own "sentimental journey", retrieved from the neighbouring farmhouse to which it had drifted, through the generosity of its American finder; the Nolkekens bust itself.



Sentimental journey: Monkman inspecting Laurence Sterne's gravestone in 1969

They survived disasters, when wind or weather threatened to undo their work. Visitors came in increasing numbers to the house, and even more to the garden that Julia, a gardener of genius, made round the house, and then extended to the quarry beyond. It became the most beautiful of such literary places of pilgrimage, visitors coming from all over the world.

Monkman was the *genius loci*, gently conveying his own enthusiasm to them all. Always elegantly dressed, with spectacles that might have belonged to Sterne's friend and portraitist Joshua Reynolds, he

seemed to epitomise his subject. The digest of his learning began to appear, too, in articles on the complex genesis of *Tristram Shandy* and other Sterneana. The *Shandean*, an annual journal founded by friends and fellow admirers of his hero, was never without a major contribution from him. He was still at work on his edition of Sterne's sermons, the least-read but to him most deeply characteristic of all his writings, till shortly before he died. He is to be buried at the foot of Sterne's grave.

The Laurence Sterne Trust will perpetuate his work, in conjunction with the Centre

for Eighteenth Century Studies that York University has imaginatively created with this in mind. The vision will not be lost: "By all that is good and virtuous, if there are three drops of oil to be got, and a hammer to be found within ten miles of Shandy Hall – the parlour hinge shall be mended this reign."

Nicholas Barker

Kenneth Mackay Monkman, producer and scriptwriter, born Carlisle 17 April 1911; married 1946 Vita Duncan (one son; marriage dissolved), 1957 Julia Bearder (two sons); died Northolt, North Yorkshire 22 March 1998.

Cardinal Antonio Ribeiro

ANTONIO RIBEIRO was for more than a quarter of a century Patriarch of Lisbon and head of the Roman Catholic Church in Portugal.

He led the Church through turbulent political times, taking over soon after the death of the dictator Antonio Salazar, and not long before the revolution of 1974 overthrew the old order and brought Portugal close to becoming a Communist-run state, before moving back towards a Western-style democracy. Ribeiro also had the difficult task of adapting the Church to a changing society after the Second Vatican Council.

Born to a poor family in a small village near the north-eastern city of Braga, he was an only child whose father, Jose, died when he was young. He was sent to seminary in Braga when he was 10 and stayed until he left as a priest aged 25. He took a doctorate in theology at the Gregorian University in Rome in 1959 and travelled widely through Europe before returning to Portugal.

He began a succession of teaching jobs in Catholic institutions and published several books on theology and the Church's social teaching. He became active in movements that sought to adapt the Church to modern times after the Second Vatican Council. He became a public figure through his weekly religious television programmes between 1959 and 1967, when he was appointed assistant bishop of Braga.

In 1969 he was transferred to Lisbon as assistant bishop to the then Patriarch, Cardinal Gouveia Cerejeira. Many felt that Cerejeira – who had held the office for four decades – was too close to the Salazar regime. Ribeiro's relations with the government were at times tense. When he took over the office of patriarch on Cerejeira's resignation in 1971, the change of style was immediately apparent. In the March 1973 consistory Pope Paul VI made Ribeiro a cardinal at the age of only 44, the youngest of the cardinals.

After the 1974 revolution, sparked by a military revolt, Ribeiro shared the concerns of many that the Communists were becoming too powerful, but his moderate, discreet approach won him broad respect. As democracy took root in Portugal once again Ribeiro largely stayed out of the political arena. He felt that, while the Church should make its position clear, it should not dictate to elected politicians what they should or should not do. It was only on such issues as abortion that he spoke out, calling on Catholics not to vote for parties that supported it.

Already suffering from cancer and in failing health, Ribeiro asked Pope John Paul II in 1996 to relieve him of his duties, but the pontiff turned down his request. However, he did grant him an assistant, Jose da Cruz Policarpo, who is widely expected to replace him as Cardinal. Ribeiro's background – a pious village upbringing followed by years in Catholic education, – left him a little detached from the rest of Portuguese society. He was close to his mother and spent much time with her in the village. But those who got to know him found him friendly and approachable. He was able to reach a good rapport with the ordinary clergy.

Ribeiro saw his task as modernising the Catholic Church in Portugal, concentrating on the education of the clergy and laity, evangelisation and the involvement of laity in this work, but did not follow through reform. Highly cultured and articulate, he was too distant and private a man to tackle the problems facing the Church in a traditionally Catholic nation as it underwent vast political, social and religious change.

Felix Corley

Antonio Ribeiro, priest, born Gondomara de Bessa, Portugal 21 May 1928; ordained priest 1953, Assistant Bishop of Braga 1967-69; Assistant Bishop of Lisbon 1969-71; Patriarch of Lisbon 1971-98; named a Cardinal 1973; died Lisbon 24 March 1998.



His own man: Bold, with self-portrait, at an exhibition of his paintings in Edinburgh, 1994. Photograph Chris Watt

Alan Bold

AS a tireless man of letters, Alan Bold's contribution to Scottish literature is as extensive as it was relentlessly pursued. That he should have died at the age of 54 amounts to the tragic curtailment of a career which promised more, much more, for example his apparently unfinished biography of Robert Burns.

Although noted as a prolific poet, the author of at least one novel, and a collection of short stories, Bold was a maverick if also gifted critic, reviewer and anthologist. His literary hero was Christopher Murray Grieve, better known as Hugh MacDiarmid, whose *Selected Letters* Bold edited (in 1984), as well as writing a critical study, *MacDiarmid: the terrible crystal* (1983), following this scholarly labour in 1988 with a biography, *MacDiarmid*, which won him the McVie Prize as Scottish Writer of the Year.

Having first met MacDiarmid in 1962, he found his hero a willing friend and supporter. Indeed, MacDiarmid provided a foreword to Bold's first collection, *Society Inebrius* (1965), which appeared while he was still a student at Edinburgh University, where he was associated with a remarkable generation of painters which included his friends John Bellamy and Alexander Moffat. It could have been the propulsion of this acknowledged figure in modern Scottish letters that generated the extreme oddness of Bold's reputation in Scotland. In one of his poems he called Scotland "the land of the omnipotent No", and as for many Scottish artists his struggle with "the matter of Scotland" was arduous and uneasy. But it also happened.

To be in Bold's company was to know that you were in the

presence of a mind, of someone who was making an effort and with a capacity for infinite toil. Indeed, in keeping with the teachings of his master, he was perhaps closer to being a European intellectual than a purely local product infatuated with native things. There was a robust and enlivening seriousness to him.

It is sad to say, but Bold's reputation was vulnerable in a Scottish literary scene famous, or notorious, for "back-scratching with a dirk". Personally, I enjoyed his company, but many others found him intimidating. In conversation he could be tiresome on such subjects as football and Elvis Presley. When he engaged you with Burns's poetry, though, or MacDiarmid's, he was spellbinding. His erudition on these and many other matters of literary interest was passionate, astounding, and truly mesmerising. He wrote well on Thom Gunn and Ted Hughes, Muriel Spark, the Scottish ballads, George Mackay Brown, war poetry, John Le Carré, and a host of other subjects, including the fine arts.

For years he contributed book reviews to the *Glasgow Herald*, with style, acumen, and insight. As a literary journalist, he was one of Scotland's best, but didn't get the credit for it. I admired him enormously for the diligence with which he got his work done and earned a living by his pen. True, though, he could be a "difficult" man, and he seemed to like it that way. But there was a teddy-bear side to him as well. Generous, wholehearted, as he undoubtedly was, he seemed to open up but seldom, as if – like many writers – he was too engaged with his own privacy and solitude to allow you to get to know him better. He was out of step with

literary and other values of younger writers tackling MacDiarmid. To put it mildly, he was in two minds (at least) when it came to the work of recent writers associated with Glasgow.

Although I disagreed with him (to an extent) I found his views refreshingly free of cant and humbug. He was his own man, a writer of absolutely independent mind, a quality of being which he may well have learnt from MacDiarmid. For example, although an Edinburgh man, he chose to live at Balbirnie in the Fife countryside. It is tempting to see Bold's Balbirnie as the equivalent of MacDiarmid's Biggar.

From time to time I would see him on that patient, prudential ScotRail "Sprinter" which wends stoppingly from Dundee to Edinburgh. He'd be off for a dutiful stint in the National Library, after that, we'd sink a few in one of the pubs

he favoured as being a literati-free zone. No sooner, though, than you got used to the longevity of recent Scottish poets – octogenarians, spy, and they didn't even bother to look after themselves – than something like this happens.

Bold's poetry is inconsistent. It ranges from the dull, through the indifferent, to the very good. There's a lot of it. But as a poet-critic he was productive, reliable, fast, poised, and invaluable. A new selection of his poems is now necessary, and there may be no one better placed to edit it than his daughter, Valentina, one of the brightest of the younger Scottish scholars and critics.

Douglas Dunn

Alan Norman Bold, poet, writer, critic and artist; born Edinburgh 20 April 1943; married 1963 Alice Howell (one daughter); died Kirkcaldy, Fife 19 March 1998.

Announcements for Glasgow SOUTH, PARAGRAPHS & DEATHS (Deaths, Admissions, Marriages, Deaths, Memorial services, Wedding announcements, In Memoriam) should be sent to the Glasgow Editor, The Independent, 100 George Street, Glasgow G1 1AA, or faxed to 011-292 2010, and are charged at £6.50 a line (VAT extra). OTHER Glasgow advertisements must be submitted in writing (or faxed) and are charged at £10 a line (VAT extra). They should be accompanied by a daytime telephone number.

Lectures

National Gallery: Culin Wiggins, "Mothers (4): Annunciation", 19th. Victoria and Albert Museum (Linda Woolley, "Tread Softly: shoes from the collections at the V&A", 2.30pm). Tate Gallery: Renato Guttuso, "Rebels with a Different Cause: Expressionism versus Impressionism", 1pm.

ROYAL ENGAGEMENTS

The Duke of York gives a lunch for the Maltese Foreign Minister at Buckingham Palace, 11.30am. The Duke of Edinburgh's 70th birthday, a dinner at St James's Palace. The Prince of Wales, Prince Charles and the Duchess of Cornwall attend the 30th anniversary of the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 11.30am. The Duke of Kent visits the Prince of Wales' School of Leadership Studies, 11.30am. The Duke of Kent visits the Prince of Wales' School of Leadership Studies, 11.30am. The Duke of Kent visits the Prince of Wales' School of Leadership Studies, 11.30am.

Birthdays

Mr David Ames MP 46; Mr Alan Arkin, actor, 64; Mr Graham Barlow, cricketer, 48; Mr Pierre Berle, conductor and composer, 73; Mr Jean Caan, actor, 59; Miss Kyung-wa Chung, Korean concert violinist, 50; Lord Graham of Edmonton, former MP 73; Mr William Hague MP 37; Miss Jean Graham Hall, former circuit judge, 81; Baroness Hayman, Minister for Roads, 49; Lord Hood QC, 73; Air Marshal Sir Peter Horsley, chairman, Osprey Aviation, 77; Miss Elizabeth Jane Howard, novelist, 73; The Right Rev William Inge, Bishop of Truro, 53; Sir George Jefferson, former chairman, Videotext Corp, 77; Sir Bernard Katz, Nobel prizewinner and biophysicist, 87; Vice-Admiral Sir Ian McGeoch, 84; Sir Leslie Melville, economist, 96; Mr Leonard Nimoy, television actor, 67; Mr Geoffrey Paul, consultant, Stenberg Foundation, 69; Mr Barry Pryce, chairman, Horticulture Research International, 64; Mr David Quiller, former vice Lord-Lieutenant of Somerset, 77; Mr Harry Rabinowitz, conductor and composer, 82; Miss Diana Ross, singer, 54; Vice-Admiral Sir Jonathan Tait, former Deputy Commander, Fleet, 59; Mr Andrieu Turner QC, former MEP, 69; Mr Colin Webb, former general manager, Press Association, 59.

Anniversaries

Birth: Konrad von Gesner, physician and naturalist, 1516; Jean Restout, painter, 1692; William Wollaston, philosopher, 1659; Jenny Meyer, singer and teacher, 1834; William Edward Harpole Lecky, historian, 1838; George Smith, Assyriologist, 1840; Harry Furniss, caricaturist and illustrator, 1854; Alfred Edward

Housman, poet, 1859; Fouad I, King of Egypt, 1868; Sir Gerald Huxton, Edward Basson du Maurier, actor-manager, 1873; Robert Lee Frost, poet, 1874; Wilhelm Backhaus, pianist, 1884; "Chico" Leonard Marx, comedian, 1887; Richard Thomas Church, poet and novelist, 1892; Palmiro Togliatti, Communist, 1893; Jean Epstein, film director, 1897; Tennessee Williams (Thomas Lanier Williams), playwright, 1911. Deaths: Sir Thomas Elyot, diplomat, 1546; John Winthrop, first governor of Massachusetts Bay Colony, 1649; Sir John Vanbrugh, playwright and architect, 1726; John VI, King of Portugal, 1826; Ludwig van Beethoven, composer, 1827; Augustus Leopold Egg, painter, 1883; Thomas Hancock, inventor, 1865; Walt Whitman, poet and essayist, 1892; Cecil John Rhodes, financier and statesman, 1902; Sarah Bernhardt (Rosine Bernard), actress, 1923; Timothy Michael Healy, statesman, 1931; David Lloyd George, first Earl Lloyd-George of Dwyfor, statesman, 1945; Max Ophüls (Maximilian Ophüls), film director, 1957; Raymond Thornton Chandler, novelist and scriptwriter, 1959; Sir Noël Coward, playwright, 1973; Josef Albers, painter, 1976; Lin Yutang, writer in Chinese and English, 1976; Anthony Frederick Blunt, art expert and writer, 1983. On this day: The Royal Agricultural Society was incorporated, 1840; the Paris Commune was established, 1871; the first cremation in England took place at Woking, 1886; driving tests were introduced in Britain, 1934; women were allowed on the floor of the London Stock Exchange for the first time, 1973. Today is the Feast Day of St Basil the Younger, St Basil of Caesarea, St Basil of Seleucia, St Basil of Thaur, St Basil of Langer and St Basil of Caesarea.

LAW REPORT: 26 MARCH 1998

Paedophiles should have been given information

Region v Chief Constable of the North Wales Police and others, ex parte AS and CD; Court of Appeal (Lord Woolf, President of the Rolls, Lord Justice Schiemann and Lord Justice Robert Walker) 16 March 1998

ALTHOUGH the police should have disclosed to recently released sex offenders the gist of a police report which had formed part of their consideration of the risk posed by the offenders to the public, the opportunity to comment on the report would not have altered the decision of the police to reveal the offenders' identity.

The Court of Appeal upheld the decision of the Divisional Court (Law Report, 16 July 1997) dismissing applications for judicial review of the decision of the North Wales Police to reveal the identity of two former sex offenders.

The appellants, who were husband and wife, had been released after serving sentences

of 11 years' imprisonment for serious sexual offences against children. As a result of adverse publicity in local newspapers, they had had to move several times, and had eventually bought a caravan and moved to a site near Wrexham.

The local police had received a copy of a Northumbria police report, which recorded probation service views that the appellants were extremely dangerous people who will pose a considerable risk to children and vulnerable adults in the community in which they settle and will target and procure such people for sexual abuse.

The report suggested they had resisted all forms of therapy intervention.

After a meeting of the local police child protection team, at which it had been pointed out that the statement in the report that the appellants had refused therapy was incorrect, it had nevertheless been decided that attempts should be made to encourage the appellants to move from the caravan site,

where many children would be staying over the Easter holidays.

The appellants had remained at the site and it had been decided that the site owner should be informed of their past history. He had told them to move on, and their whereabouts were currently unknown. Edward Fitzgerald QC and Tim Owen (Michael Pardon, Newcastle-upon-Tyne) for the appellants; Presley Baxendale and Pughinder Saini (Mrs J.A. Thigpen, Colwyn Bay) for the Chief Constable; James Eadie (Treasury Solicitor) for the Home Secretary; Michael Douglas QC and Stephen Barker, solicitor (Everheds, Birmingham), for the police.

Lord Woolf MR said that the appellants had not substantially challenged the reasons for dismissing their application for judicial review. The argument had instead revolved around new issues, against the background of fresh policy guidance issued by the Home Office to police forces as to the man-

agement of information about sex offenders. It was argued that the North Wales Police had treated the appellants in a procedurally unfair manner, having been influenced throughout by the Northumbria police report.

The decision whether to disclose the identity of paedophiles to the public was a sensitive one. In the present case the gist of what the police had learned about the appellants should have been disclosed to them. They might have had information which could have caused the police to re-assess the degree of risk which they posed. Having said that, however, and bearing in mind that the police were aware of the inaccuracies in the Northumbria police report but were still of the opinion that the appellants created a high degree of risk, any information which they could have given would not have altered the outcome.

The result of the passage of

time between the hearing before the Divisional Court and the hearing of the appeal had been to draw attention to the advantages, where it was practical, of obtaining an offender's version of events.

It had also highlighted the significance of trying to find appropriate accommodation for offenders when they were released from prison. If previous sexual offenders knew that help with safe accommodation would be available, they were less likely to go to ground. If their whereabouts were known it would be easier to minimise the danger of further offending. It was now recognised that what was required above all was a proactive rather than a reactive policy for dealing with offenders who had committed offences against children in the past.

There was however no relief that would be appropriate to grant to the appellants and the appeal was dismissed. Kate O'Hanlon, Barrister

Utilities
to face
profits
clawback

insists
again the

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FINANCIAL JOURNAL OF THE YEAR

Bacardi set to win American whisky giant Dewar's for £800m

By Andrew Yates

BACARDI, the drinks giant which produces the famous white rum, is set to buy Dewar's, America's leading whisky brand. The Bermuda-based group has fought off intense competition from the world's leading drinks groups to emerge as front-runner to buy Dewar's in what will be one of the biggest deals the industry has seen. Bacardi is willing to pay around £800m for the brand, industry sources say.

A deal is believed to be imminent. Bacardi is close to finalising an agreement and could seal the acquisition within the next few days – barring a last-minute blockbuster bid from a trade rival or one of several financial buyers which have cast their eyes over the group.

Dewar's has been put up for sale by Diageo, the world's largest drinks group which was formed last December when Grand Metropolitan merged with Guinness. Diageo has also been forced to dispose of Dewar's in order to get the

European and American competition authorities to approve its mega-merger.

The sale of Dewar's offered a unique opportunity to buy one of the world's leading spirits brands and attracted interest from around the globe. Up until a few weeks ago Diageo was still talking to a number of drinks groups about the sale of Dewar's. Now, however, Bacardi seems to have beaten Pernod Ricard, the French drinks group, and Seagram, the French drinks group, and Seagram of Canada in the race to capture the whisky brand. Allied Domecq was also

interested in Dewar's but dropped out of the race after the price sailed above £600m.

Bacardi is a private group run by descendants of Don Facundo Bacardi, the group's founder. He created Cuba's first rum in 1862. However, the family fled Cuba in 1960 when Fidel Castro took over the country and seized the company's assets.

Since then the family has built up Bacardi to become the world's leading drinks brand, with annual sales of 19.5 million cases.

In 1993 Bacardi expanded its empire by buying Martini & Rossi which sells the world renowned vermouth. It also produces Asti sparkling wine and Hatuey beer. However it has always lacked a major whisky brand in its spirits portfolio.

Dewar's is the leading scotch brand in the US, selling just under 3 million cases a year and making annual operating profits of around £55m. The £800m price tag smashes analysts' earlier forecasts.

A Diageo spokesman refused to comment on any sale and said that talks be-

tween the drinks groups were confidential. If Bacardi does buy Dewar's it could be welcome news for the Scotch whisky industry as the spirits group is likely to maintain a large part of the existing business in Scotland.

The creation of Diageo is likely to lead to a worldwide consolidation of the drinks industry. Allied Domecq is looking to find a drinks partner to take on the new industry Goliath and could increase its efforts to establish a tie up with Bacardi in the wake of the Dewar's deal.

Utilities to face profits clawback

By Michael Harrison

THE PRIVATISED utilities will have to share profits with customers where they are "unearned" or result from deliberately misleading regulators, under Government proposals unveiled yesterday.

The long-awaited Green Paper on utility regulation also sets out plans to bring the pricing of the gas, electricity, water and telecoms industries under a greater degree of political control.

Shares prices of the privatised water companies rose in response to the decision, widely expected, not to alter the fundamental way in which prices are controlled. The Department of Trade and Industry had wanted to include a mechanism for capping excess profits but was overruled by the Treasury. Individual regulators for each of the industries will be issued with statutory guidance requiring them to take the

Government's wider social and environmental aims into account in pricing the utilities.

This means that they could have an explicit obligation to protect the interests of poorer consumers and other disadvantaged groups through, for instance, cross-subsidisation of prices. The regulators would also have a new primary statutory duty to protect consumer interests.

However, the Government has decided to stick with the system of incentive regulation developed over the last 15 years whereby the RPI-X formula – which sets percentage price rises below inflation – is retained as "fundamental basis for price regulation".

This will allow companies to keep profits which result from greater efficiency. But alongside this the Government has proposed the introduction of an "error correction mechanism" which would allow excess profits to be clawed back promptly. The mechanism would be



In the pipeline: The Government wants its social and environmental aims to be re-enforced by the regulators

triggered either when companies benefited from factors outside their control – for instance, a sudden drop in costs of supplies – or when they had deliberately misled regulators into setting too lenient a price cap by giving inaccurate or incomplete information.

Margaret Beckett, President of the Board of Trade, insisted the Government was not returning to Old Labour ways by penalising the utilities. She said a better deal for the consumer

would be achieved by "competition where possible, regulation where necessary".

But John Redwood, the shadow Trade and Industry Secretary, said the proposals could amount to a "back door" tax on business and warned they could lead to permanent uncertainty about how much they could earn and afford to invest. "She should set a price control and live with it," he added.

The Green Paper also proposes

■ The merger of the electricity and gas regulators, Ofreg and Ofgas, into a single energy regulator.

■ Separation of electricity supply (buying and selling of electricity) from distribution – the wires which deliver electricity.

■ Greater openness and accountability with a requirement on regulators to justify key decisions.

The Government said it had not ruled out the idea of advisory panels to aid individual reg-

ulators. Replies are being sought by the end of May. Mrs Beckett said there was no reason why the review should not lead to lower prices but this would be achieved through a mixture of fairer regulation and the opening up of the markets to competition particularly in gas and electricity.

The proposals were broadly welcomed by the regulators themselves, consumer groups, and the industries involved.

Outlook, page 25

Argos enlists Littlewoods

By Nigel Cope
City Correspondent

ARGOS unveiled radical plans to modernise its business yesterday after admitting that it had become out of step with customers' needs.

The group announced a new retailing strategy and a home shopping joint venture with Littlewoods as part of its fight against the hostile £1.6bn bid from Great Universal Stores.

It is to spend up to £5m on a modernising programme that will see its stores upgraded with better racking and improved window displays while its old fashioned catalogue will be made more modern and user-friendly. More higher-value products will be added to improve customer choice though the company said it would not compromise on its commitment to low prices.

Stuart Rose, who has only been Argos chief executive for six weeks, admitted that Argos had to become a little more fashionable. "It has been one step behind customers in fashion rather than half a step ahead." The shops will start to stock "impulse" ranges such as greeting cards, wrapping paper, and videos in an attempt to grab more revenue from existing customers.

Mr Rose pledged to improve the margins by 1 per cent over two years by improving the sales mix, adding more own-label and exclusive ranges which carry higher mark-

ups and by increasing the level of direct sourcing.

The strategy statement came as the company released a trading update which showed that same-store sales had improved in the 12 weeks to 12 March. Margins were up by 0.5 percentage points in the same period.

The group's second defence document, which is expected to include the return of cash to shareholders, will be published next week if the GUS bid is cleared by the Office of Fair Trading. The Takeover Panel yesterday extended the offer timetable, saying Argos will now have two days following the OFT's decision to release its last information.

Argos's joint venture agreement with Littlewoods will see the pair launch a fashion home shopping catalogue aimed at Argos customers. The 700-page catalogue will consist of branded clothing and be tested later this year. A national roll-out is planned for autumn 1999. Littlewoods will produce the catalogue and handle the orders, while Argos will provide its customer database.

The joint venture's costs were described as "minimal" by Mr Rose, who said expected losses in the first year could be around £2m each. The company will use the database to target higher-spending customers. A home delivery service will be rolled out nationally next year at a cost of £15m.

Outlook, page 25

Brussels insists Britain must rejoin the ERM

By Katherine Butler

BRITAIN would have to rejoin the revamped exchange rate mechanism – which the pound crashed out of in September 1992 – if it wanted to abandon the pound and join the euro zone, the European Commission made clear yesterday.

But the Commission has left the door open to technical membership for a period shorter than the two years mentioned in the Maastricht Treaty, saying that exchange rate stability is the key. A revamped ERM is set to be launched next January.

In its definitive recommendation on economic convergence of the countries fit to join EMU in the 1999 first wave, the Commission ruled out Sweden – which has never been a mem-

ber of the ERM and which has experienced major fluctuations against the ERM currencies.

But the Commission recommended that Italy and Finland, who only joined the ERM in November 1996 and October 1996 respectively, and therefore do not strictly fulfil the membership criterion, should be admitted.

Clearly the onus would still be on Britain to ensure sterling shadowed the euro after its launch and to find a way of demonstrating stability without being in the new currency grid. The Treasury repeated yesterday the insistence of Gordon Brown, the Chancellor, that Britain has "no intention" of rejoining the ERM.

That aside, the budgetary position of the UK and its performance on inflation would qualify Britain for membership.

The Commission's spring economic forecasts also show Government borrowing as a percentage of gross domestic product is expected to fall this year to 0.6 per cent, down from 1.9 per cent in 1997, due to the windfall tax on the profits of privatised utilities.

The Commission forecasts the deficit will fall again in 1999 to 0.3 per cent. It warns that because the bulk of the revenue from the windfall tax will not be spent until after 1998, the positive effect on the deficit will begin to unwind as revenues are spent.

Britain is one of only four members whose debt is below the 60 per cent of GDP target set by the treaty. The spring forecasts put the British debt to GDP ratio at 52.3 per cent this year falling to 50.9 per cent next year.

Outlook, page 25

Cheap holidays for Thomson investors

By Andrew Yates

THOMSON Travel Group, the UK's largest tour operator, is planning to offer 10 per cent discounts on all its holidays for private investors who buy shares in its forthcoming £1.5bn flotation.

Customers will be able to save almost £50 on the price of an average holiday while a family jetting off to the sun stands to save £120 on a typical break.

Investors who apply for at least £500 worth of shares will

be allowed to join the Thomson Founders' Club. As well as cheap holidays they will qualify for a range of perks including seat upgrades on the group's Britannia airline, the chance to have the best hotel rooms on offer, additional luggage allowances and newsletters with special holiday offers.

The 10 per cent discount will apply to all holidays advertised in the Thomson and Skytours brochures as well as getaways with Holiday Cottages. A member of the club will be able to

apply for as many holidays as he or she wants providing they travel with the party.

Thomson Travel plans to send details of the perks to more than a million of its customers through the post. It is also launching a national TV advertising campaign to entice the public to subscribe for shares.

The group will issue a flotation prospectus in late April and will join the stock market in early May. Analysts estimate that the group could be valued at up

to £1.5bn, although strong interest from private investors and financial institutions could push that price tag even higher.

The shares will not be offered at a discount to employees, although they are likely to be given preferential treatment when the shares are allocated.

Private investors can register for the share offer by contacting share shops including Barclays Stockbrokers, Hargreaves Lansdown, NatWest Brokers, Skipton Building Society and The Share Centre.

About 10 per cent of the shares in the flotation are likely to be allocated to private investors. Another 20 per cent are likely to be taken by the founding Thomson family with the rest awarded to financial institutions.

Thomson's flotation comes as Lunn Poly, its travel agency, continues its battle against the Government over the imposition of a 17.5 per cent insurance premium tax. Thomson is awaiting the outcome of a judicial review into the tax hike.

City watchdog plans much harsher penalties

By Lea Paterson

THE WATCHDOG responsible for City of London traders yesterday unveiled plans to introduce far stiffer penalties for breaches of its rules. If the proposals from the Securities and Futures Authority (SFA)

are accepted, penalties for firms that fall foul of the regulator could increase fourfold.

Individuals who breach SFA rules could find themselves with double the penalties they could expect to receive under the current regime.

The SFA says also it wants to "foster the notion that good

compliance is good business" and is proposing that fines be reduced, or even waived altogether, if firms have good compliance procedures and notify the SFA of any breaches.

The watchdog said: "If a firm with adequate controls discovers an issue in a timely way and promptly informs the SFA,

giving the full facts (together with a proposed course of remedial action – including compensation where necessary – disciplinary action will be very much less likely."

The SFA proposals, released yesterday, listed additional factors that it believes should be taken into consideration when

setting fines. These include the number of rule breaches, the time scale over which the breaches occurred, whether there was widespread wrongdoing throughout the firm and the means of the firm in question to pay fines.

Firms have until 30 April to respond.

Yesterday in the markets

STOCK MARKETS

Indices	Close	Change	Change (%)	52 wk high	52 wk low	Yield (%)
FTSE 100	5067.80	-15.90	-0.31	6105.80	4189.10	3.40
FTSE 250	5544.40	-21.10	-0.38	5820.10	4384.20	2.99
FTSE 350	2888.00	-4.20	-0.15	2917.00	2075.70	3.32
FTSE All Share	2795.85	-3.00	-0.11	2838.77	2058.07	3.29
FTSE SmallCap	2826.20	-12.40	-0.44	2815.10	2182.10	2.82
FTSE MidCap	1414.30	-1.00	-0.07	1410.50	1225.20	3.20
FTSE AIM	1058.70	-0.80	-0.08	1110.50	855.90	1.04
FTSE AIM	1058.70	-0.80	-0.08	1110.50	855.90	1.04
Dow Jones	7851.34	-25.91	-0.33	8920.58	6555.78	1.57
Nikkei	18658.34	-51.95	-0.28	20910.78	14438.21	0.97
Hong Kong	11870.65	-185.20	-1.56	12820.31	7908.13	3.27
Hang Seng	5096.82	-68.38	-1.35	5240.83	3192.33	1.59

INTEREST RATES

Short sterling	UK 10 year gilt	US long bond
3 month 1 yr 5 yr 10 yr	1 yr 5 yr 10 yr	1 yr 5 yr 10 yr
7.56 1.19 7.56 0.66 5.80 -1.66 5.82 -1.89	5.69 -0.07 5.81 -0.41 5.61 -1.16 5.91 -1.08	5.06 0.13 0.70 -0.09 1.79 -0.74 2.36 -0.79
Germany 3.53 0.26 3.79 0.34 4.88 -1.01 5.43 -1.24		

CURRENCIES

\$/£	DM/£	¥/£
at 5pm	at 5pm	at 5pm
1.6745 -0.08 1.6189	1.8272 -0.03 1.8185	161.85 -0.15 161.70
D-Mark 3.0612 -0.17 2.7350	D-Mark 1.8278 -0.15 1.8918	¥ 128.90 -0.14 123.65
Yen 215.84 -22.32 200.13	Yen 128.90 -0.14 123.65	
E index 107.00 0.00 98.50		

TOURIST RATES

Australia (dollars)	2.400	Italy (lira)	2,938
Austria (schillings)	20.86	Japan (yen)	214.24
Belgium (francs)	61.21	Malta (lira)	0.6407
Canada (\$)	2.3067	Netherlands (guilders)	3.3498
Cyprus (pounds)	0.8631	Norway (kroner)	12.37
Denmark (kroner)	11.38	Portugal (escudos)	301.49
Finland (markka)	9.0755	Spain (pesetas)	251.15
France (francs)	9.9441	South Africa (rand)	7.9743
Germany (marks)	2.9774	Sweden (kroner)	12.97
Greece (drachme)	514.53	Switzerland (francs)	2.435
Hong Kong (\$)	12.56	Turkey (lira)	384,075
Ireland (pence)	1.1792	USA (\$)	1.6331

Source: Thomas Cook

Deep Pan Pizza chain to disappear

By Andrew Yates

DEEP PAN Pizza restaurants, best known for offering "all you can eat" deals for hungry punters, are set to disappear from the high street.

The move comes in response to a sharp fall in profits at the chain caused by the growing trend for customers to dine out on more exotic and upmarket food.

City Centre Restaurants, which owns the troubled chain, has decided to scrap the Deep Pan Pizza name and create a new upmarket chain of pizza restaurants.

It is also looking to sell some sites or convert them to other restaurant brands.

James Naylor, chief executive of City Centre, said yesterday: "The brand was becoming dated. Thin crust pizzas are becoming more popular, with fewer people eating deep pan."

There are currently 89 Deep Pan Pizza restaurants around the UK.

City Centre plans to keep the 35 sites which are located alongside out-of-town leisure centres. They will still sell pizzas but rename the restaurants and introduce higher class menus.

About 30 high street sites will be used to house City Centre's other restaurants such as Caffe Uno while the remaining restaurants will be sold.

City Centre revealed it had received tentative offers for all its high street sites and would consider selling them if it received an attractive offer. "We could sell the restaurants if we get the right price, but it is very early days at the moment," said Mr Naylor.

City Centre has already had to install new management at Deep Pan Pizza after profits from the chain fell £2m last

DEEP PAN PIZZA CO

year. The group blames poor management, huge discounting and larger menus which added to costs, for the shortfall.

The result was an improvement in the chain's performance but not enough to justify its continued existence. The chain will be phased out over the next few years.

Despite the problems at Deep Pan, City Centre unveiled a 4 per cent rise in pre-tax profits to £17.5m for the year to December.

Mr Naylor said the group planned to open at least another 46 restaurants this year.

City Centre is planning an aggressive expansion of its Caffe Uno Italian style eateries, opening another 15 in the next 12 months.

New chains such as Frankie & Benny's, based on a New York in the 1950s theme, and Wok Wok, which specialises in modern Asian food, are proving a success and will also be rolled out rapidly.

Last year's acquisition of Est Est Est, the North of England Italian chain, has exceeded expectations and another six restaurants are due to open soon.

City Centre denied the restaurant market was becoming overcrowded after an explosion in openings in recent years.

Mr Naylor said: "The eating out market is set to continue growing very fast... driven by lifestyle changes. As people age they are turning away from McDonald's and eating out in restaurants."

City Centre's shares, which fell sharply after a recent profit warning prompted by Deep Pan's problems, recovered 6.5p to 118p yesterday.



The drop: At Bernard Matthews, profits are down by 24 per cent

NTI

Pound batters Matthews

By Kerry Benefield

TURKEY magnate Bernard Matthews was hit hard by the strength of the pound in 1997, as he watched profits at the company that bears his name fall 24 per cent.

The group, whose activities include the production and marketing of meat and fish products as well as insurance, posted profits before tax and exceptional items of £14.1m in the 52 weeks to 28 December, compared with £22.6m in 1996. Earnings per share fell to 6.06p from 12.69p, while the final dividend increased to 2.5p from 2.4p.

"It is all to do with the strength of sterling," David Joll, managing director, said yesterday. "Were it not for the currency rates, our profits would have topped our record year in 1996. It's entirely to do with sterling."

Mr Matthews, who chairs the group, said sales of overseas subsidiaries, up 14 per cent, and a broadening of the business base through the

development of the brand name had buoyed the company.

"UK sales of branded added-value products were 8 per cent higher than in the previous year and produced another record profit," he said.

"Our trading conditions in Hungary improved in the second half of 1997 through a combination of lower raw material costs and the opening of our new feed mill. Our German and New Zealand operations show promise for the future but the French market remains difficult," he said.

Mr Joll said the drop in feed prices augured well for 1998. "The price of wheat is extremely important to us and the price is down significantly now. It's a little early to point to numbers, but the year-to-year sales are up in the first 12 weeks."

Mr Joll said the company expects to regain lost ground through new product launches, a more extensive advertising campaign, and further reductions in operating costs.

House of Fraser shares leap as profits double

SHARES in House of Fraser rebounded yesterday after the department store group reported a near doubling of profits last year. The retailer, which has 51 stores, reported pre-tax profits after exceptional items of £28.3m in the 53 weeks to 31 January, up 91 per cent from the previous year and within analysts' expectations.

Its shares surged by almost 10 per cent, closing up 14.5p at 170p after a poor performance so far this year. The shares last week fell to 150p, their lowest level for over a year.

The retailer is in the middle of a big recovery programme to improve profits after struggling since the Fayed brothers, owners of Harrods, floated it in

1994 at 180p a share. Profits before exceptional items were £29m against a loss last time of £38.4m. Sales rose to £812m from £781.4m. The dividend was held at 5.5p a share.

Brian McGowan, chairman, said the company had been successful in meeting its targets and expected to continue this progress in the current year.

"We are confident both of maintaining good sales growth in the current year and of achieving further increases in gross margin and gross profit," Mr McGowan said.

Retail analysts said the leap in the share price was more of a reaction to positive comments by the group on current trading. "The shares have bounced be-

cause of the reassurance on current trading," said Nick Bubb, retail analyst at SG Securities.

John Coleman, chief executive, said the group's performance showed the recovery was on track. "I would like to point out that our womenswear sales were up 20 per cent last year. We are very confident about how our fashion wear is trading right now." House of Fraser's own-bought fashions, as opposed to branded concessions, were up 11.6 per cent.

Mr Coleman said the reopening in late April of the revamped Barkers department store in Kensington, London would usher in House of Fraser's move into the next century.

- Agencies

Tarmac 'nervous' on transport

TARMAC, the heavy building materials and construction group, yesterday voiced "nervousness" over the Government's transport policy.

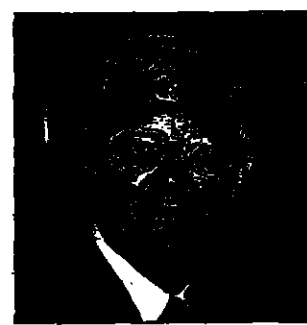
Neville Simms, Tarmac chief executive, said the group had moved increasingly towards building up a road and rail maintenance business to cope with the decline in new road building and the increasing emphasis on public transport.

"Maintenance work will be a key factor in profitability growth in future. It should account for £500m of our turnover this year after around £400m in 1997. It's a higher margin business and lower risk," he said.

Mr Simms said he was optimistic for 1998 and beyond, despite what he called "a little bit of nervousness" about the Government's roads policy.

His comments came as Tarmac announced higher-than-expected annual results and said it was on course for more growth on the back of buoyant markets in Britain, the US and continental Europe.

"1997 was a year of considerable further progress. This



Neville Simms: Optimistic

year has started well and I am confident that, whatever uncertainties lie ahead for the British economy, our strategic direction and clear objectives will deliver an improved performance in 1998 and beyond," he said.

Tarmac, one of the leading road developers and now building a rail maintenance business, raised pre-tax profit by 59 per cent last year to £120.2m on a 4 per cent rise in sales to £2.77bn. The total dividend was raised to 5.65p from 5.5p previously.

The profit figure outstripped market expectations by around

£4m while the dividend was marginally higher than forecast.

"January and February have been relatively kind months. More importantly, we've started to put price increases into the market and we hope they will stick this year as they have done pretty well for the last four or five years," Mr Simms said.

He said the construction market continued to improve while medium-term growth prospects for the US were favourable and steady growth was likely to continue in continental Europe.

He attributed Tarmac's profit rise to improved operating performance, cost-cutting and the industry's rationalisation.

The company was likely to take on more workers this year in what he called a benign, sustainable market.

Tarmac said its heavy building materials division, which accounts for slightly more than 40 per cent of group turnover, saw operating profit rise almost 20 per cent to £141.6m on a 6 per cent sales rise to £1.19bn.

- Reuters

Recommended final cash offer by Albert E Sharp on behalf of Skayfeast Limited for UK Safety plc

Albert E Sharp ("AES") announces on behalf of Skayfeast Limited ("Skayfeast") that by means of a formal offer document dated and posted on 25 March 1998 ("the Offer Document") and by means of this advertisement, AES is making a recommended offer ("the Offer") on behalf of Skayfeast to acquire all of the issued and to be issued share capital of UK Safety plc ("UK Safety"). Skayfeast has acquired from the Schroder UK Buy Out Fund and the Schroder UK Buy Out Fund II their entire holdings of 7,542,619 and 3,069,061 UK Safety shares representing, in aggregate, approximately 26.28 per cent of UK Safety's issued share capital. In addition Skayfeast has received from John Newman (UK Safety's Chief Executive) and Paul Cockburn (UK Safety's Production Director) irrevocable undertakings to accept the Offer in respect of their respective holdings of 101,547 and 4,834 UK Safety shares representing approximately 0.26 per cent in aggregate of the existing issued share capital of UK Safety.

Terms defined in the Offer Document have the same meaning in this advertisement.

Subject to the Offer becoming or being declared wholly unconditional, a UK Safety shareholder who validly accepts the Offer will receive 2.5 pence in cash for each UK Safety share.

The Offer, which is final and will not be increased, values all of the issued and to be issued share capital of UK Safety at approximately £1.01 million. The Offer represents a discount of approximately 66.7 per cent to the closing middle market price of 7.5 pence per UK Safety share on 19 March 1998, the last business day prior to the date of the announcement of the Offer.

The full terms and conditions of the Offer (including details of how the Offer may be accepted) are set out in the Offer Document and the Form of Acceptance.

UK Safety shareholders who accept the Offer may rely only on the Offer Document and the Form of Acceptance for all the terms and conditions of the Offer.

The Offer is by means of this advertisement being extended to all persons to whom the Offer Document may not be dispatched who hold or who are entitled to have allotted or issued to them UK Safety shares. Such persons are informed that copies of the Offer Document and Form of Acceptance are available for collection (during normal business hours) from Albert E Sharp of Pinners Hall, 105-108 Old Broad Street, London EC2N 1ET.

The Offer, which has been made by means of the Offer Document and this advertisement will be open for acceptance until 3.00pm on 15 April 1998 (or such later time(s) and/or date(s) as Skayfeast may, subject to the rules of the City Code, decide).

The Independent Directors of UK Safety, who have been advised by KPMG Corporate Finance, consider that the Offer is in the best interests of UK Safety shareholders and unanimously recommend all UK Safety shareholders to accept the Offer as they intend to do in respect of their own beneficial holdings of 166,000 UK Safety shares representing approximately 0.4 per cent of UK Safety's issued share capital. In providing advice to the Independent Directors, KPMG Corporate Finance has taken into account the Independent Directors' commercial assessments. John Newman and Paul Cockburn, together with Ken Evans (UK Safety's Marketing Director) have agreed, subject to the Offer being declared unconditional, to subscribe for equity in Skayfeast and have not, therefore, participated in the Independent Directors' recommendation.

The Offer is not being made, directly or indirectly, in or into the United States, Canada, Australia or Japan or by use of the mails or by any means or instrumentality of interstate or foreign commerce or of any facilities of a national securities exchange of the United States, Canada, Australia or Japan.

This advertisement is not being published in or otherwise distributed or sent in or into the United States, Canada, Australia or Japan and persons reading this advertisement (including custodians, trustees and nominees) must not distribute or send this advertisement, the Offer Document or the Form of Acceptance (nor any related document(s)) in or into or from the United States, Canada, Australia or Japan nor use the mails or any means or instrumentality of interstate or foreign commerce or of any facilities of a national securities exchange of the United States, Canada, Australia or Japan for any purpose, directly or indirectly, in connection with the Offer and doing so will invalidate any related purported acceptances of the Offer.

This advertisement is published on behalf of Skayfeast by AES and has been approved by AES solely for the purpose of section 57 of the Financial Services Act 1986.

AES, which is regulated by the Securities and Futures Authority is acting exclusively for Skayfeast in connection with the Offer and no-one else and will not be responsible to anyone other than Skayfeast for providing the protections afforded to customers of AES nor for providing advice in relation to the Offer.

KPMG Corporate Finance, a division of KPMG, which is authorised to carry out investment business by the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales, is acting exclusively for UK Safety in connection with the Offer and no-one else and will not be responsible to anyone other than UK Safety for providing the protections afforded to customers of KPMG Corporate Finance nor for providing advice in relation to the Offer.

The director of Skayfeast and the directors and Alchemy Partners (Göteborg) (which manages the Alchemy Investment Plan, which is investing in Skayfeast) accept responsibility for the information contained in this advertisement other than the recommendation of the Independent Directors. The Independent Directors accept responsibility for their recommendation in this advertisement. To the best of the knowledge and belief of these respective parties (having taken all reasonable care to ensure that such is the case) the information contained in this advertisement for which they are respectively responsible is in accordance with the facts and does not omit anything likely to affect the import of such information.

26 March 1998

THE INVESTMENT COLUMN

EDITED BY ANDREW YATES

Barratt builds on housing recovery

BARRATT's results wouldn't be the same without an outburst against the Government. Now Sir Lawrence Barratt, the old war horse of the housing industry, has stepped down, it was left up to Frank Eaton, his successor, to have a rant at how house buyers are being victimised by the powers that be. But Barratt has little to complain about.

The housing market is going great guns at the moment. Mortgage interest tax relief may go and interest rates will probably rise further. However, houses are more affordable now than they have been for some time. The Government's prudent stance on the economy have seen long-term interest rates fall to new lows, stimulating out-price deals from lenders.

When Sir Lawrence stepped down last time the company promptly went downhill as the recession brought the industry to its knees. But history is unlikely to repeat itself.

The industry is still cyclical and will struggle to grow at the cracking pace it has set over the last few years. That said, as long as the economy does not get out of control, the housing market should continue to grow at, say, 3 to 4 per cent a year.

Barratt has capitalised on the good times by expanding its presence in the South-east, which has shown by far the fastest growth in the UK. Just as importantly, it has been able to keep costs under control.

Wage demands and land costs have ballooned over the last 12 months but Barratt has proved better than most at keeping a lid on expenses. That helped profits for the six months to December rise 38 per cent to £34.1m.

Barratt remains one of the best run businesses in the sector. Barratt is on track to build 8,000 homes in this financial year and maintain its double-digit volume growth. That means, barring the sort of crash last seen in the early 1990s, Barratt looks set fair for the next few years.

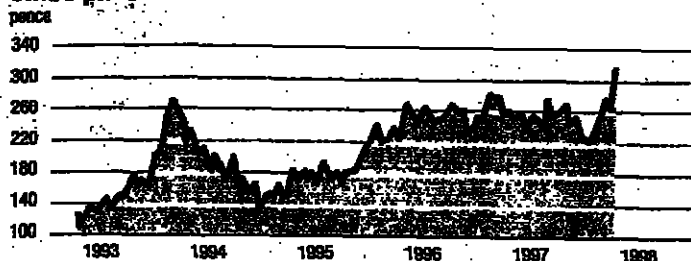
Barratt's shares and the house building sector have both staged a comeback over the last few months. The shares rose another 13p to 319p yesterday. Analysts forecast full-year profits of £90m, putting the shares on

Barratt: At a glance

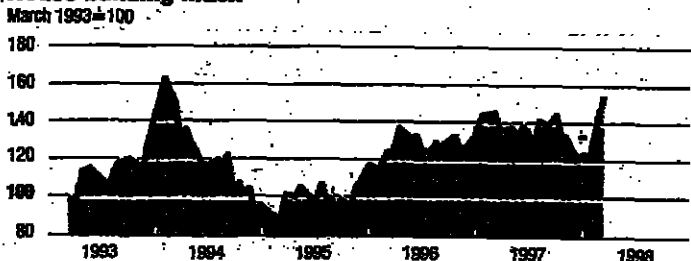
Market value: £738m, share price 319p (+13p)

Five-year record	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Turnover (£m)	579	634	714	311	388
Pre-tax profits (£m)	47.1	52.1	70.1	24.8	34.1
Earnings per share (p)	15.2	17.8	19.8	7.0	10.0
Dividends per share (p)	7.10	8.25	8.0	2.0	3.3

Share price



House building index



Source: Datastream

a prospective price-earnings ratio of 12. Some housing stocks are beginning to look a bit pricey but Barratt remains good value.

Sportswear boom could be over

IS IT time to call the turn on sports retailers? Companies like JJB Sports and Blacks Leisure have enjoyed exponential growth on the back of the popularity of replica football shirts and the power of brands like Nike, Reebok and Adidas. But clouds have begun to gather on the horizon just as things should have been looking sunny in the run-up to the World Cup. Nike issued a profits warn-

ing last week and though the problems are mostly in the US and the Far East, over-supply is causing in price cutting everywhere. This is bound to have a knock-on effect on UK retailers, who are pawns in a much more powerful game.

Demand here does seem to have faltered. Sports Division, the privately owned retailer, is delaying its decision on the timing of its float and share prices have been falling. JJB shares have lost 18 per cent of their value since their peak just three weeks ago. On top of all this, the former merchandise director of Manchester United has said the replica sales boom may be over.

With the huge store opening programmes being undertaken, the market is clearly more difficult. The question now is whether this is just a dip or the beginning of the end of this particular fashion.

The next news will be JJB Sports' full-year results next month. With analysts expecting profits of £34.5m the shares trade on a forward rating of 20 times.

This is far higher than Blacks Leisure, which has a wider spread of interests, and JJB Sports, which has been affected by profits warnings. The World Cup may provide a boost but, with higher interest rates affecting consumer spending and the threat of a shift in fashions, investors should proceed with caution. There is a case for locking in profits.

Marketing boost for Abbott Mead

ADVERTISING is a notoriously cyclical business. When economic conditions deteriorate, a finance director's knife becomes magnetically attracted to the advertising budget.

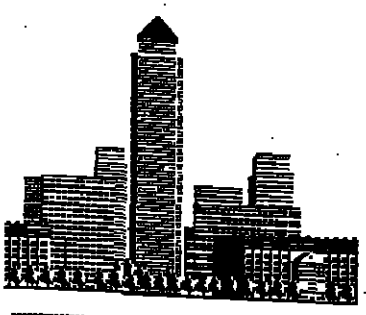
In the last six years, advertisers have seen their business grow without so much as a blip. But it is debatable if the boom times can last much longer. Unlike its rivals in Madison Avenue, Abbott Mead Vickers lacks the global reach which could protect it from a downturn in the domestic economy. So, it has switched to other devices.

In the three years since 1994, the advertiser has, in effect, switched from being an advertising company that does marketing to being a marketing company that does advertising. Whereas marketing brought in just 39 per cent of profits in 1994, it now brings in 59 per cent.

Because marketing - such as PR, design, literature and packaging - is less cyclical than advertising and less likely to be brutalised by recession, this should reassure shareholders.

Abbott Mead Vickers has maintained its position as the largest advertising company in the UK, and is likely to stay that way for a while. New business went well in 1997, with the company winning contracts with Aer Lingus, Volvo and BT Business Communications.

Earnings in the year to December 1997 were ahead of expectations at 17.3p a share and Pannure Gordon forecasts 19p a share for this year. The shares yesterday rose from 386p to 402.5p, valuing the group at £290m. This puts in on a multiple of 21 - high but much lower than many of its peers. Worth a punt.



OUTLOOK ON THE PANTOMIME OF QUALIFYING FOR EMU, PROPOSALS TO REGULATE UTILITIES, THE DILEMMA OVER RAILTRACK, AND ARGOS'S MAKEOVER

Erm, here's a piece of Euro-fudge to chew on

BACK in the 1970s Britain was the basket case of Europe. Rigid labour markets, an overweening state sector, high inflation and a tax and spend mentality. You name it, we had it. Then Mrs Thatcher came along and the painful process of readjustment began. Just as the experiment was about to succeed she was lured into the Exchange Rate Mechanism. Two years later Thatcherism was dead and the country was in the grip of a deep recession. The climb back to recovery only began the day Norman Lamont sang in his path, Britain left the ERM and the pound underwent a competitive devaluation.

It is easy to see why the present government is wary of re-entering a fixed exchange rate system. The 1990s-style Britain could walk into Economic and Monetary Union tomorrow but it will not, indeed cannot, because the accompanying reduction in interest rates would blow the lid off the economy.

Eleven other European countries have no such qualms, however. Yesterday they were duly declared fit and proper members of the single currency after a classic piece of Euro-fudge.

The architect of the project, the European Commission, has chosen to ignore the fact that two of the founder members, Italy and Belgium, have debt to GDP ratios that make the eyes water. They are double those permitted under the Maastricht convergence criteria. That spells pain to the people if they are to keep within the limits of deficit to GDP at the same time as servicing their debt.

Likewise plucky little Finland is being welcomed into the euro-fold even though it has not been in the ERM for the required

two year period whereas the Swedes, who do not want to be in the first wave anyway, are not being admitted because they are not ERM members at all.

Gordon Brown reassures that Britain has no intention of re-joining the ERM. Brussels meanwhile talks tough about membership being a necessary pre-cursor to joining the single currency.

But as yesterday's pantomime shows, qualifying for entry depends more on having the political will than meeting the convergence criteria. If and when Britain chooses to sign up, some other fudge will be found to smooth the way. The question is whether, by then, it will want to join the sort of club that would have it as a member.

A mechanism for future errors

AFTER nine months and as many draft versions, the Government's proposals for regulating the privatised utilities have finally emerged blinking into the daylight. There are precious few surprises. Nevertheless, the confirmation that Margaret Beckett is not about to tear up the system of incentive regulation which governs the water, gas, electricity and telecoms industries put a spring into share prices yesterday.

As in so many other areas of policy, the realities of office make it hard to deliver on the rhetoric while in opposition. Old Labour would dearly have loved to settle some scores with the privatised utility bosses by squeezing them until the pips squeaked. New Labour, the natural party of business, accepts that imperfect as the

system may be, the best way to improve the consumer's lot is to give the utilities an incentive to make profits.

The Treasury's paw marks can be seen all over the Green Paper, particularly in the decision to leave the RPI-X formula as the basis for price regulation. But there is one weasel phrase that will need careful monitoring and that is the proposed "error correction mechanism". The purpose of this, we are promised, is to claw back profits only where the wool has been pulled over the regulator's eyes or where surplus profits are made unexpectedly.

But given the increased degree of political control over regulation which is evident elsewhere in the Green Paper, regulators may be tempted to reach for the mechanism too often.

The strings on Railtrack's deal

THE TWO LINES to plot on any graph of Railtrack's performance since privatisation are improvements in the rail network against share price movement. You do not need a train-spotter's eye for detail to see that the latter has outstripped the former by a country mile.

Shareholders have enjoyed a rollicking good ride unlike passengers as the figures for punctuality, reliability and quality of service are starting to show.

Now Railtrack is offering to make amends by increasing its 10-year rolling investment programme to £17bn and straighten out the bottlenecks. But the offer comes with strings attached - turn

the regulatory screw further and the extra spending will be in jeopardy. The timing is no coincidence since the Rail Regulator, John Swift, wants to make life tougher for Railtrack when access charges - the amount the train operating companies pay to use the network - are reviewed for the five-year period up to 2006.

Railtrack has another devil - that the current formula does not allow it to reap benefits from any growth in the market. The Conservatives having privatised the railways on the assumption that they would then stagnate. Rather than doing ad hoc deals, such as the revenue sharing deal struck with Virgin Trains on the West Coast Mainline, Railtrack wants some mechanism built into the regime to reflect what it says could be 30 per cent passenger growth and a tripling of freight traffic over the next decade.

All in all, the regulator and his political master John Prescott are in an awkward spot. Their hearts may tell them to punish Railtrack's shareholders for having enjoyed a free ride but their heads will conclude that is not the best means of achieving a modern railway. The clincher may be Mr Prescott's dependence on Railtrack to rescue the Channel Tunnel Rail Link and modernise the Tube. No wonder Sir Bob Horton's beaming features are even more noticeable on the footplate than usual.

First taste of Argos's defence

FOR A retailer that never seems to have moved out of the 1970s, Argos has suddenly come over all designer trendy.

Instead of its usual grey presentations the company yesterday hired the London Weekend Television studios to regale audiences with its new retail strategy. There were lots of yellow kettles and bright red vacuum cleaners everywhere and, up on the podium, new chief executive Stuart Rose was reading from his autograph with all the aplomb of a seasoned Oscars presenter. Amazing what a hostile bid can do.

But strip away the gloss and the key issue is how much Argos's new "vision" will add to the share price compared to the cash offer Great Universal Stores has tabled.

Certainly, much of yesterday's thinking was common sense and is what GUS would probably do given the chance. Spending £5m on giving the stores and catalogue a makeover to make them more user-friendly seems sensible. Adding a wider range of goods - including more at higher price points - increases consumer choice. And selling additional lines such as greeting cards, wrapping paper and videos in the stores could add extra revenue.

The story is surely just the appetiser. The real meat will come next week with the defence document. Mr Rose has pledged to increase margins by a full percentage point over two years. On some calculations this could add over 70p to the share price. The promise of a special dividend next week could turn what has been a dull bid into a decent fight. But Argos is still relying on its shareholders making a leap of faith. And it will take more than a slick presentation to get them on board.

Barratt hits at housing policy

By Andrew Yates

FRANK EATON, chairman of Barratt, one of the largest housebuilders in the country, yesterday launched a stinging attack on the Labour Government. He accused Tony Blair, the Prime Minister, of ignoring the needs of first-time buyers by continuing to reduce the level of Miras, the tax relief on mortgage payments.

Mr Eaton said yesterday: "The Government is discriminating against the first-time buyer. If this continues it will force more young people into renting instead of home ownership."

Barratt is calling on Labour to provide more subsidies for first-time buyers. It believes the five interest-rate hikes since Labour came to power will have a particularly damaging effect on less affluent parts of the country.

The company also criticised the current planning system, which it believes is in desperate need of an overhaul. Planning permission can be delayed for at least 12 months in some cases. "The Government has failed to tackle the planning system, which has broken down," Mr Eaton said. A shortage of land has seen prices soar, by a quarter over the last 12 months.

The outburst came as Barratt warned that the housing market was likely to slow this year after a rapid period of growth. Barratt said current house sales were the highest the group had seen for more than a decade, prompting comparisons with the housing boom of the 1980s.

The strong housing market helped the group achieve a 38 per cent rise in pre-tax profits to £34.1m last year, thanks to a 10 per cent rise in prices in the South-east, where Barratt has chosen to concentrate its new investment.

However, Mr Eaton warned the price of new homes in London

and the Home Counties would come off the boil this year, rising by around only 3 or 4 per cent. Barratt also believes that the strong growth in the South-east is unlikely to ripple out to the rest of the country. According to the group, the housing market in the North of England is likely to remain relatively depressed with prices edging up by 2 or 3 per cent this year.

Barratt now builds 45 per cent of its houses in the South of England and that proportion will continue to rise.

The group plans to sell 8,000 houses this year and is on track to meet its target of 11,000 sales in the year 2000. Building costs

Former BZW chief earned £5m for 13 months' work

By Lea Paterson

THE FORMER head of investment banking at Barclays benefited from a package worth almost £1.5m last year, taking his total benefits for 13 months work at the bank to more than £5m.

The 1997 package made Bill Harrison - formerly chief executive of BZW, Barclays' investment banking arm - Barclays' highest paid director for the second year in a row.

Barclays' annual report, posted to shareholders yesterday, revealed Mr Harrison received a

basic salary of £250,000 in 1997 as well as a payment of £946,000 largely relating to his departure from the bank last October. Barclays also contributed £275,000 to Mr Harrison's pension.

Next week, the former BZW chief will also be able to exercise 132,304 share options granted to him in 1996. At current market prices, Mr Harrison's options are worth around £1.1m.

Mr Harrison - who joined the bank in September 1996 - resigned his post just 13 months later after the Barclays board decided to put BZW's equity

and corporate finance businesses up for sale.

In 1996, the former BZW chief received a package worth almost £5m.

Martin Taylor, Barclays' chief executive, received £738,000 in salaries and bonuses last year, a fall of 10 per cent. Mr Taylor was provisionally awarded £238,000 of shares under the bank's "executive share award scheme" - this is a deferred award which can be partially collected in 2001. He also has been provisionally awarded 35,000 share options under the bank's longer-term incentive scheme.

Barings shake-up may hit 200 jobs

By Lea Paterson

ING Barings is to close its emerging markets equity derivatives division. The division employs around 200 people, most of whom are based in London.

ING - the Dutch bank which rescued Barings after the Nick Leeson scandal - said yesterday that not all 200 equity derivatives staff would lose their jobs. The bank declined to give further details of the number of the jobs at risk, although a source said "the majority" of the employees would probably be let go over the coming months.

The decision to close the emerging markets equity derivatives division follows a three-month strategic review, according to a memorandum distributed to staff on Tuesday.

ING Barings is not withdrawing completely from the equity derivatives business - it will continue to run an operation out of Amsterdam.

In the staff memo, Arjun Mathrani, ING Barings' chief executive, tried to reassure staff that the group was committed to corporate and investment banking, saying recent concerns had been "unfounded".

It had been rumoured ING Barings was considering pulling out of investment banking altogether, and tension within the bank was heightened after cuts in the bank's Latin American and Asian divisions last month.

The latest cuts reflects the group's decision to focus on Western Europe and the US. ING Barings is to restructure its business into three divisions: equities/investment banking; treasury; and emerging markets, high-yield debt and derivatives.

Jeremy Palmer will head up the equities/investment banking division. Richie Prager and Jose Berenguer will be co-heads of emerging markets, high-yield debt and derivatives and Ted de Vries will head up the treasury division.

Trade unions attack Midlands decision to reject RBS bid

TRADE UNIONS yesterday urged Birmingham Midlands to rethink its decision to reject Royal Bank of Scotland's bid of between £60m and £63m. The board of Midlands said on Tuesday it could not recommend the bid and urged Royal Bank to release it from an exclusivity agreement that stops it talking to other bidders. Halifax has offered £78m, giving members an extra £150 each in windfall payments. Unlike Royal Bank, which guarantees that jobs and branches will be kept for three years, Halifax has made no such pledges. Rob MacGregor, assistant secretary of Bifu, the finance union, said: "Jobs and services must be the central issue - not the size of payout to members. It's important that Birmingham Midlands thinks again."

Ofgas backs doorstep selling

PEOPLE who change their gas supplier find doorstep selling "useful and informative", Ofgas, the gas industry regulator, said. Ofgas said a Mori survey of households in phase 2b of gas competition (Kent, East and West Sussex) found that 83 per cent of those who had switched to a new supplier had been contacted on the doorstep. The survey found price was the main reason for switching.

Rexam delays payout

REXAM, the packaging products group, has delayed paying a final dividend to shareholders for another 12 months in order to get round the abolition of advance corporation tax (ACT) in April 1999. Rexam has a surplus ACT on its balance sheet of £23m which it is "anxious to utilise" before ACT ends. It proposes deferring the final 1997 dividend until next April and enhancing it by 8.7 per cent to 6.5p for late payment.

Vaux offers £20m for Manor

VAUX Group, the regional brewer and hotelier, has made a recommended offer to buy Manor Hotels for a total of £20m, including £3m of debt and net current liabilities. Manor owns three hotels with 267 bedrooms, in Ipswich, Norwich and Old Harlow. Manor's turnover in the year to 31 December was around £9m.

Sears forms joint venture

SEARS Financial Services, the store card unit of retail group Sears, has formed a joint venture company with Equifax, the US transactions processing company, to develop credit card and store card processing services in the UK. The joint venture will be 51 per cent owned by Equifax and 49 per cent by Sears Financial Services, known as SearsCard. It will use SearsCard's established business base to offer processing services to third parties in the UK.

Go-ahead for Bass pub sale

MARGARET BECKETT, the President of the Board of Trade, has decided not to refer the proposed acquisition by Punch Taverns Investments of 1,428 pubs from Bass to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission.

Norweb develops DPL

NORWEB DPL, the joint venture of Northern Telecom and United Utilities' unit Norweb Communications, has signed agreements with 10 international utilities which have committed themselves to proceeding with initial market deployment of Digital Power-Line technology. Norweb said the potential market for DPL is more than 35 million homes in seven European and Asian countries.

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- 13.7 SVGA colour screen (17" optional)
- 64x voice modem
- 4MB ATI AGP2 3D graphics
- 30x CD-ROM
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- 14" SVGA colour screen (15" optional)
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Legal & General

Water stocks rise as DTI plans are revealed

MARKET REPORT



PETER THAL LARSEN

It was hardly the response the Government hoped for. On the day Margaret Beckett, the President of the Board of Trade, unveiled the Government's consultation paper on the future of utility regulation, stocks in the water sector soared. Not quite the consumer-friendly message that the spin doctors would have wanted to send.

In fact, the two events were not directly linked. The gushing water shares seemed to stem from a presentation to analysts by Thames Water on Tuesday, which played down fears that the entire sector was heading for a big confrontation with the regulator over the next price review.

Thames Water put on 28p to 1,025p, while Anglian Water ended the day up 24p at 930p. Hydrant rose 15p to 977.5p and Severn Trent was 18p better at 1,028p.

Multi-utility United Utilities gained ground on the

same factors, as well as the news that it had formalised its joint venture with electronics group Nortel to develop a technology which allows electricity wires to carry telephone calls and internet traffic. The shares gained 26p to 881p.

Meanwhile, other electricity and gas shares took the news that the Government wants to merge their respective regulators - Ofwat and Ofgas - in their stride. BG, the most heavily regulated arm of the former British Gas, shed 0.25p to 317.75p.

Of the few remaining electricity firms Southern Electric dipped 5.5p to 538p while National Power finished down 14p at 571p and PowerGen gave up 6p to 804p.

The Footsie continued to pause for breath after the headlong rush towards the 6,000 mark that marked most of the first quarter. Having seen their year-end forecasts for the index smashed within

weeks, most equity strategists are advocating caution as they decide where shares will head next. Despite briefly edging above 6,000 in the morning, the Footsie ended the day down 15.9 points at 5,967.8.

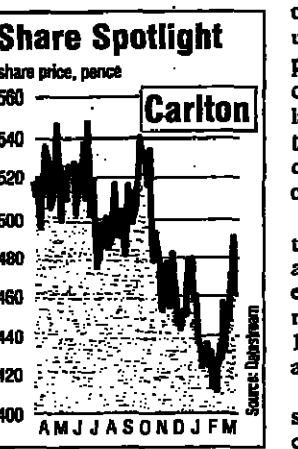
One notable casualty was Carlton Communications, which dipped 25p to 460p on a downgrade by NatWest. Analysts reckon first-half figures from Michael Green's media group will suffer from lower profits in Broadcast Television and a downturn on the Vision and Sound Products side.

The broker has also slashed its valuation of British Digital Broadcasting, Carlton's joint venture with Granada, to £200m from £920m on fears that programming costs will rise.

A "buy" recommendation from Dresdner Kleinwort Benson lifted shares in Boots to 145p to 932.5p. An upgrade from the same broker also boosted Sage, the accounting

software group, which put on 15p to 1,352.5p.

Cable & Wireless dialled a 16.5p gain to 754p on rumours from France that it is about to sell its stake in French mobile operator Bouygues. Selling the holding, which is estimated to be worth about £600m, would go a long way to realising the £1bn of disposals targeted by C&W's



chief executive, Dick Brown.

The bubble of bid speculation burst on hotels and betting group Ladbrokes, which tumbled 16p to 342p. Railtrack's £1.7bn investment programme got the thumbs up from the market, with the shares steaming ahead 43.5p to 1,033.5p.

Capital Radio tuned into an 18p gain to 700p ahead of City briefings next week. The company is preparing to update analysts on the performance of its restaurant division. The stock suffered last year after Capital bought the My Kinda Tunes restaurant chain, but has risen by 40 per cent so far this year.

Savoy's shares continued their retreat as the chances of a bid for the hotel group emerging in the near future receded. They closed down 135p at 1,665p, having peaked at 1,887.5p a few days ago.

Vickers, in the process of selling its Rolls-Royce luxury car unit, firmed 7.5p to 233p

as Volkswagen confirmed it had put in a bid. Catalogue retailer Argos fired another salvo in its defence against a 570p share hostile bid from rival GUS, and was rewarded with a 13p share price hike to 620p. GUS eased 2p to 777p.

A stronger-than-expected set of final results from House of Fraser boosted the shares 14.5p to 170p. Less than six months ago, they peaked at 228.5p.

Shares in supermarket group Sainsbury's dipped 2p to 343.5p as Dairy Farm, the Hong-Kong based food retailer, confirmed that it had placed its 11 per cent stake, pocketing a cool \$279m (£167m) in the process.

Upbeat figures from Barratt, the country's largest housebuilder, pushed its shares up 13p to 319p and gave the rest of the sector a fillip. Bovis Homes put on 6p to 270p while minnow Lhaden, also reporting results, added 13p to 199.5p.

TAKING STOCK

SHIRE Pharmaceuticals, marketing and licensing prescription drugs, lifted the recent gloom over the biotech sector with a 45.5p rise to 409p. Shire cleared a stock overhang by completing a global share offering which included listing on Nasdaq, the US market for hi-tech stocks. Shire offered 21 million shares at 343p, raising £72m. In the past year, the shares have soared by close to 90 per cent.

OVER on AIM, hotel minnow Peel Hotels added 7p to 97.5p. The project, which owns the Bull Hotel in Peterborough, has had a better reception than the last time Robert Peel ventured on to the stock market as chief executive of Thistle Hotels. There he was forced out by institutional shareholders after a disappointing share price performance following Rotation. But shares in Peel Hotels have risen by 60 per cent since coming to the market at 60.5p a week ago.

52 week	High	Low	Stock	Price	Chg	Yld	P/E	Div
Alcoholic Beverages								
45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45
45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45
45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45
45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45

52 week	High	Low	Stock	Price	Chg	Yld	P/E	Div
Breweries Pubs & Rest								
45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45
45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45
45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45
45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45

52 week	High	Low	Stock	Price	Chg	Yld	P/E	Div
Building/Construction								
45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45
45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45
45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45
45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45

52 week	High	Low	Stock	Price	Chg	Yld	P/E	Div
Building Materials								
45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45
45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45
45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45
45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45

52 week	High	Low	Stock	Price	Chg	Yld	P/E	Div
Chemicals								
45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45
45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45
45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45
45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45

52 week	High	Low	Stock	Price	Chg	Yld	P/E	Div
Distributors								
45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45
45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45
45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45
45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45

52 week	High	Low	Stock	Price	Chg	Yld	P/E	Div
Engineering Vehicles								
45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45
45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45
45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45
45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45

52 week	High	Low	Stock	Price	Chg	Yld	P/E	Div
Food Producers								
45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45
45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45
45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45
45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45

52 week	High	Low	Stock	Price	Chg	Yld	P/E	Div
Gas Distribution								
45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45
45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45
45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45
45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45

52 week	High	Low	Stock	Price	Chg	Yld	P/E	Div
Health Care								
45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45
45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45
45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45
45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45

52 week	High	Low	Stock	Price	Chg	Yld	P/E	Div
Household Goods								
45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45
45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45
45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45
45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45

52 week	High	Low	Stock	Price	Chg	Yld	P/E	Div
Insurance								
45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45
45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45
45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45
45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45

52 week	High	Low	Stock	Price	Chg	Yld	P/E	Div
Investment Trusts								
45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45
45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45
45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45
45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45

52 week	High	Low	Stock	Price	Chg	Yld	P/E	Div
Media								
45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45
45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45
45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45
45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45

52 week	High	Low	Stock	Price	Chg	Yld	P/E	Div
Leisure & Hotels								
45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45
45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45
45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45
45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45

52 week	High	Low	Stock	Price	Chg	Yld	P/E	Div
Oil Exploration & Production								
45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45
45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45
45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45
45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45

52 week	High	Low	Stock	Price	Chg	Yld	P/E	Div
Other Financial								
45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45
45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45
45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45
45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45

52 week	High	Low	Stock	Price	Chg	Yld	P/E	Div
Paper & Printing								
45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45
45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45
45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45
45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45	45.45

52 week	High	Low	Stock	Price	Chg	Yld	P/E	Div
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Listening to whingeing exporters is no way to run an economy



DIANE COYLE
ON UK INDUSTRY
AND THE REAL
EXCHANGE RATE

THERE is doom and despondency anywhere you look in British manufacturing. The Eeyore tendency, never far from the surface, is wallowing in the gloom cast by the shadow of the strong pound. Some commentators have started to compare the current rise in sterling to the appreciation triggered by tight policy in the early 1980s.

In a note this week, Michael Saunders of Salomon Smith Barney, the investment bank, makes this point. He notes grimly that the manufacturers which survived the 1981-82 recession were leaner and fitter, but there were so few of them that output did not regain its 1978 level until 1987. You could get five German marks for your pound in 1981 compared with just over DM3 now. But British inflation has been so much higher than overseas inflation in the intervening period that the real exchange rate is now approaching the same level as in 1982.

The same arguments about an overvalued exchange rate were deployed by industry in 1991-1992, before the pound was driven out of the exchange rate mechanism. There were troubles all round among the captains and sub-lieutenants of industry after "Black Wednesday", celebrating what in any other country would have been seen as a national economic humiliation.

So far this time around

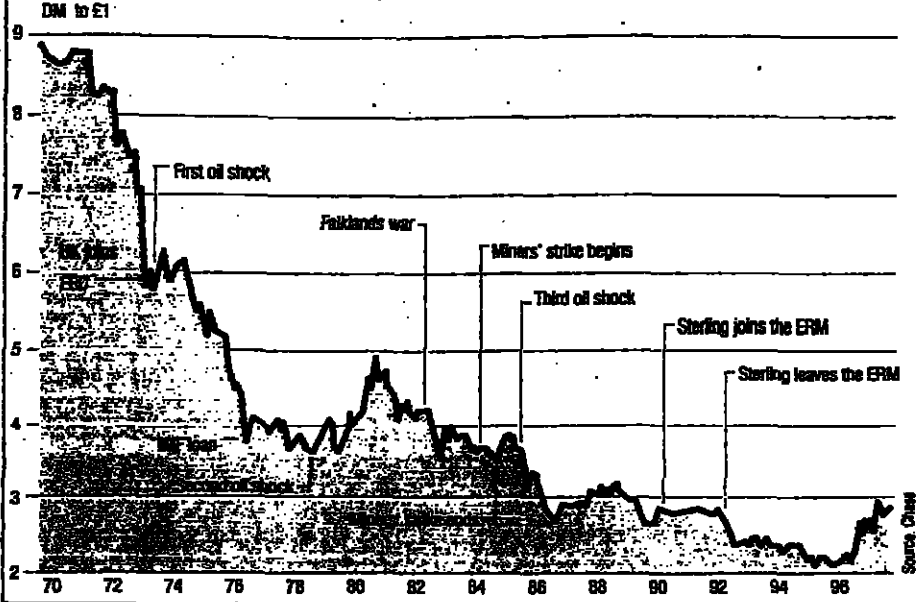
manufacturing output has been flat, not plummeting, and employment in industry has been, if anything, increasing. But businessmen say the exchange rate needs to fall to something like DM2.60 - a 15 per cent drop from its current level - if catastrophe is to be averted. In the past three months the first actual evidence backing their claim has emerged, with falling export volumes and a widening trade deficit.

There is no question that an overvalued exchange rate causes economic pain and is something that exporters might reasonably want to avoid. What is less reasonable, in the case of UK plc, is the fact that the complaints about an overvalued exchange rate recur every five years despite the fact that the pound has fallen sharply in value over the years. It has indeed fallen much less in real terms but this is in large part because the constant nominal depreciation is counteracted by British inflation remaining higher than overseas inflation. The inflation problem is itself fed by devaluation, which raises import prices and tends to feed into a vicious circle of higher wage and price inflation.

This is no way to run an economy. Although they have complained from time to time, it is impossible to imagine German businessmen whingeing constantly, North-style, because of the strong mark. Quite the reverse: German businessmen have seen a strong mark as a vote of confidence in the strength of the economy and its manufacturing base.

The difference in attitude can be explained by different business strategies. According to a report published earlier this week by the Employment Policy Institute, many British companies opt to "pile in high and sell 'em cheap". This can be a completely rational choice for firms with a low-income customer base and unsatisfactory industrial relations or work-place structures. What's more, it is a deep-rooted strategy. In his marvellous history of the post-War Labour government,

The history of £/DM since 1970



Never Again, Peter Hennessy quotes Keynes's damning April 1945 assessment of British industry:

"When it comes to making a shirt or steel billet... we have to admit ourselves beaten by both the dear labour of America and the cheap labour of Asia or Europe... If by some sad geographical slip the American air force (it is too late now to hope for much from the enemy) were to destroy every factory on the North-east coast and in Lancashire, at an hour when the directors were sitting there and no one else, we should have nothing to fear."

What more telling comment on the performance of British manufacturing over the past 50 years could there be than to note that "Europe" would now count with America as a dear labour, high-value producer while the UK would not? At no point in the past half century has the great mass of British business made an effort to switch from the low-skill, low-value track that means exports have to compete on price alone to the high-skill, high-value track that would make quality some defence against an exchange rate appreciation. It is, sadly, still

very true that the strong pound makes it much harder for British companies to compete in overseas markets because so many have only the one string to their competitiveness bow. They have reacted as they normally do: first out profit margins on exports; second, complain.

If it were easy to change strategies, more firms would have done so. Clearly, a web of economic, institutional and cultural factors has trapped Britain in its bottom of the market niche. Successive governments have identified the problem without being able to solve it.

Does that make it necessary for the Bank of England to alter course and cut interest rates? Absolutely not. For one thing, the link between the exchange rate and fiscal or monetary policy is simply not as mechanical as most people seem to imagine. A cut in interest rates, or an easier Budget, might even have boosted the pound if the financial markets concluded that looser policy now would mean much tighter policy in future. Besides, a lot of the reason for sterling's appreciation lies in the weaker state of the continental economies and the approach of

economic and monetary union (EMU), both outside the control of the Bank or the Chancellor.

More important, surely, is it worth trying to avoid going through the same old loop once again? For the first time in a generation we have in place macro-economic policies that justify a strong and stable exchange rate. The pound will fall from its current giddy level at some point this year because an emerging balance of payments deficit reflects the momentum of inflationary pressure in the economy. And by the end of the year German interest rates will have to climb because of the approaching start of the single currency.

But a nearly right level of interest rates in the UK and a tough Budget do mean this cycle will be more muted than previous ones. Then it will be up to exporters themselves to figure out how best to compete in a stable world where a depreciation of the pound does not come to the rescue once every business cycle, only for its benefits to be whittled away within five years by the resulting inflation.

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PEOPLE & BUSINESS

JOHN WILLCOCK



AS I forecast a couple of weeks ago, Jon Moyinhan has split his role as chairman and chief executive of PA Consulting Group by appointing a new chief executive. The new man is Jeremy Asher, a 39-year-old Harvard MBA.

Mr Moyinhan, you will recall, fell out with the majority owners of the PA Consulting Group, the Butten Trust, and "resigned". He un-resigned before Christmas after the Trust agreed to share more of PA's income with current employees.

In fact, Mr Moyinhan continued to work for PA throughout the tiff. PA had commissioned headhunters to find a successor for Mr Moyinhan, and this money was unwasted when he decided to stay, since they picked Mr Asher.

Mr Asher trained as a consultant but has spent most of his career in the oil industry. He recently helped buy and re-commission Mobil's oil refinery in Wilhelmshaven, a vast facility with over 1,000 employees. Now he has disposed of his oil interests and will concentrate on growing PA.

Despite Mr Asher's comparative youth it is unlikely that he will be overruled by Mr Moyinhan, a man known for not being a blushing introvert.

Mr Asher says: "I have every confidence that Jon and I can take PA forward to achieve even greater heights in the consulting industry."

THE BID battle for Eastern Electricity between the two American rivals, PacifiCorp and Texas Utilities, may be of help to an environmental campaign to save the Norfolk Broads from a new infestation of electricity pylons.

That is the hope of "Operation ClearSky", a grass roots campaign launched eight months ago with the aim of preserving an area of outstanding natural beauty.

"Specifically, we want to convince the Eastern group to bury the electricity cables from Hellington to the south side of Hardley Floods in rural Norfolk, rather than replace

the existing pylons in this area with higher number carrying twice the number of cables, as it has proposed," says the group.

Brian Clarke, a spokesman for the campaigners and a local resident, says they have been trying to convince Eastern to bury the cables for the last two-and-a-half years, ever since the company proposed an upgrade of services to the Suffolk coast.

"We accept that the lines have to be upgraded, but not their arguments about cost and impact on the area," says Mr Clarke. The new pylons will go through two areas designated as of special scientific interest, for example.

So now the locals have tried writing to the American companies to see what their attitude is. Both PacifiCorp and Texas Utilities publish huge lists of environmental pledges and achievements but neither has replied to Operation ClearSky yet.

The campaigners are urging Eastern shareholders to vote in favour of the bolder most likely to bury the cables but it's not clear which one this is. Over to you, guys.

WILLIAM Chamley, a corporate lawyer with Simmons & Simmons, proved recently that devotion to the deal is everything.

According to *Legal Business* magazine, Mr Chamley was injured in a car crash in January involving a horse box, but still managed to drag himself from a hospital bed to advise his client, Raines Dairy Foods.

Mr Chamley was found staggering out of his car after it had turned over at least twice, the mag says. He lost consciousness soon after and came to in hospital. Mr Chamley had to wear a neck brace after suffering multiple fractures of his vertebrae.

The problem was that Mr Chamley had promised Raines he would be there throughout negotiations for the sale of their business in Yoplah Dairy Crest for £66m.

The deal was due to close in 10 days' time. Against doctors' orders, the intrepid lawyer started working from his hospital bed, and the deal went through.

I suppose it gives a new, less pejorative, meaning to the phrase "ambulance chaser".

THE LATEST refugee from UBS only joined the recently merged investment bank last September. Bill Smith, global head of equities research at UBS, only left Barclays last autumn, and is returning to take charge of its new savings and investment grouping.

Mr Smith, an actuary with a maths degree, was until September deputy chairman of Barclays Asset Management, and before that deputy chief executive of BZW Equities.

Martin Taylor has reorganised Barclays so that from next Wednesday all retail operations will be part of a Retail Financial Services division, whose chief executive will be John Varley.

Mr Smith will report to Mr Varley when the former joins on 6 April, and the savings grouping will include Barclays Life, Global Mutual Funds, BarclayTrust and Barclays Property Investment.

Foreign Exchange Rates

Country	Spot	1 month	3 month
UK	100.00		
Australia	2.521	2.499	2.498
Canada	2.521	2.526	2.543
Denmark	2.521	2.526	2.543
France	2.521	2.526	2.543
Germany	2.521	2.526	2.543
Italy	2.521	2.526	2.543
Japan	2.521	2.526	2.543
Netherlands	2.521	2.526	2.543
Sweden	2.521	2.526	2.543
Switzerland	2.521	2.526	2.543
US	2.521	2.526	2.543

Interest Rates

UK	Germany	US	Japan
Base	2.50%	5.50%	5.50%
Prime	2.50%	5.50%	5.50%
Discount	2.50%	5.50%	5.50%
Repo	2.50%	5.50%	5.50%

Bond Yields

Country	3m	6m	1y	2y	5y	10y
Australia	4.88	4.88	4.88	4.88	4.88	4.88
Canada	4.88	4.88	4.88	4.88	4.88	4.88
Denmark	4.88	4.88	4.88	4.88	4.88	4.88
France	4.88	4.88	4.88	4.88	4.88	4.88
Germany	4.88	4.88	4.88	4.88	4.88	4.88
Italy	4.88	4.88	4.88	4.88	4.88	4.88
Japan	4.88	4.88	4.88	4.88	4.88	4.88
Netherlands	4.88	4.88	4.88	4.88	4.88	4.88
Sweden	4.88	4.88	4.88	4.88	4.88	4.88
Switzerland	4.88	4.88	4.88	4.88	4.88	4.88
US	4.88	4.88	4.88	4.88	4.88	4.88

Money Market Rates

US Prime	8.50%	Japan Discount	0.50%
Discount	5.00%	Belgium Discount	
Fund Funds	6.63%	Discount	2.75%
Japan		Switzerland	3.30%
10 Year Repo	4.50%	Switzerland	
Repo(Aus)	4.35%	Lombard	100%
			53%

	chg	5 yr	chg	10 yr	chg
0.01	-0.04	5.31	0.04	5.72	-0.08
0.01	-0.01	4.45	0.00	4.98	-0.01
0.01	-0.03	5.12	0.01	5.34	-0.01
0.01	0.01	4.55	0.02	4.89	0.01
0.01	0.01	4.52	0.03	4.91	0.01
0.01	0.02	4.47	0.01	4.86	0.00
0.01	0.00	4.72	0.01	5.01	-0.02
0.01	0.01	4.79	0.02	5.19	0.00
0.01	0.00	4.46	0.00	4.90	0.00
0.01	0.01	4.55	0.01	5.01	-0.01
0.01	0.07	5.01	-0.03	5.25	0.01
0.01	0.01	2.71	0.00	2.55	0.02
0.01	0.07	5.25	0.04	5.81	0.01
0.01	0.03	5.00	0.04	5.61	0.04

Life Financial Futures

Contract	Settlement	High	Low	Settlement	Open Interest
Long GE	Jan-98	102.5	102.5	102.5	102.5
Short GE	Jan-98	102.5	102.5	102.5	102.5

Commodity Indices

Index	Settlement	High	Low	Settlement	Open Interest
Oil	Jan-98	102.5	102.5	102.5	102.5
Gold	Jan-98	102.5	102.5	102.5	102.5

Industrial Metals

Aluminum	Cash	3 month	6 month	1 year
Aluminum	102.5	102.5	102.5	102.5
Copper	102.5	102.5	102.5	102.5

Precious Metals

Gold	Cash	3 month	6 month	1 year
Gold	102.5	102.5	102.5	102.5
Silver	102.5	102.5	102.5	102.5

Latest Unit Trust Prices

Fund	Set	Buy	Ytd
AIM Growth Trust Ltd	102.5	102.5	102.5
AIM Growth Trust Ltd	102.5	102.5	102.5

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AIM Growth Trust Ltd	102.5	102.5	102.5
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AIM Growth Trust Ltd	102.5	102.5	102.5

Advertisement for Bloomberg Television, featuring a large image of the Bloomberg logo and text promoting their financial news and analysis services.

Fabre and O'Brien poised to extend their empires

IT IS hard to think of any Flat racing season over the last 15 or so years which could not in one way or another be described as a good one for André Fabre, but the campaign which begins on the blustery expanse of Town Moor today could turn out to be the finest yet for the man who can fairly claim to be the most successful trainer in Europe.

The best-known names in Newmarket might bridle at that description, but the statistics are awesome. Fabre has already won his first Group race of the year, the Prix Exbury at Saint-Cloud earlier this month, to take his career tally of Group races to an astonishing total of 359. No other European trainer even comes close.

And there should be more to Fabre's season than mere number-crunching, since the Frenchman prepares the two colts which most punters would nominate as the most exciting in training. In a normal March, it is something of an effort to grope back in the mind, past Chel-

Flat racing on turf returns to Britain today but, as Greg Wood predicts, the season may be dominated by the French and Irish.

tenham and an entire jumps season, to find a memory of the previous Flat season which is strong enough to grasp. Not so in 1998, however, since the mental picture of Peintre Celebre's victory in the Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe has survived the last six months undiminished.

It was not just the burst of speed which he produced at the furlong pole to dart five lengths clear, but also the agility - likened by some to that of a polo pony - which left French and British spectators alike comparing him to Dancing Brave, the winner of the race 11 years earlier, and even the hitherto incomparable Sea Bird.

Unlike the Brave, Peintre Celebre returns for another campaign, and the prospect of Fabre's colt lining up in the King George at Ascot in July will be the finest marketing tool at any track's disposal this year.

And as if one champion were not enough, Fabre is also an even-money chance to take the first colts' Classic in Britain, the 2,000 Guineas, with last year's Dewhurst winner, Xaar. With his easy success in the event, and the

RICHARD EDMONDSON
NAP: Master Beveled (Doncaster 1.30)
NB: Di Matteo (Doncaster 2.35)

Dewhurst-Guineas precedent set by Fabre's other recent Classic winners, Zafonic and Penzance, it appears that injury - which is always possible - or an emergent three-year-old wonder horse - which is rather less so - stand between the trainer and yet another Group One winner.

The second-favourite for the 2,000 Guineas is King Of Kings, whose trainer, Aidan O'Brien, will attempt to extend still further the strange symmetry between his own career and that of his namesake, Vincent. The younger model of O'Brien is already installed at Ballydoyle, the yard which the great Vincent made famous, and he too has built a formidable reputation in the winter code. It is barely a week since Aidan O'Brien saddled the first two home in the Champion Hurdle at Cheltenham, and it may be little more than a month before he enjoys his first Classic victory in Britain.

A more exciting prospect still for the Irish in general and O'Brien in particular is Second Empire, currently favourite for the Derby in June. In fact, some British punters may wonder if we will keep any of our

Classics at home, and the best we can hope for may be the slightly desperate version of "home" which is the Dubai-based Godolphin operation.

The Godolphin horses will arrive in Britain as usual just a few days before the Guineas meeting, among them Embassy and Cape Verdi, two of last year's best juvenile fillies. Both will run under the now familiar name of Saeed bin Suroor, the man who holds Godolphin's training licence, but an interesting new addition to the team this year is David Loder. The Newmarket trainer will prepare 30 horses for Godolphin, a boost to his team which prompted one existing owner to comment that Loder was now "private trainer" to the royal blue silks, before moving his own horses elsewhere.

No-one can doubt Sheikh Mohammed's eye for young training talent, however, and Loder may soon stand shoulder-to-shoulder with his most significant Newmarket neighbours.



Fabre: Outstanding team

A former member of the Godolphin team, however, will be setting out on his own. Jeremy Noseda was widely thought to have been the training brains behind the operation's most successful season, when Lammartarra won the Derby, King George and Arc. After a brief spell in America, he is now back in Britain, and while the Sheikh does not figure among his owners, he is surely the obvious trainer to follow.

Look out too for another new arrival, in the shape of "showcase" races. These daily events - almost inevitably handicaps - will be heavily promoted as part of the British Horseracing Board's strategy to promote betting turnover. They should certainly make the business of punting more interesting, but you can also be sure that it will not get any easier.

US hero gets the best of Dubai draw

THE AMERICAN star Silver Charm was tipped to become one of his country's greatest racehorses as he secured pole position in the Dubai World Cup yesterday. His big-race jockey Gary Stevens predicted he would develop into "one of the greatest we've seen" as he forecast victory for the Kentucky Derby winner in Saturday's \$4m showpiece.

His trainer, Bob Baffert, drew stall 10 for the grey Silver Charm, on the wide outside of the field, when the post positions were announced in Dubai. But starting position becomes less of a factor when aboard a horse of the class of Silver Charm, the first Kentucky Derby winner to race overseas for 63 years.

"It's scary to think about it but we've not got to the bottom of Silver Charm yet," Stevens said, "and I don't know what he is capable of. He's very genuine, full of heart and determination."

"You will see the best of him later this year. But I hope he will go down in the States as one of the greatest we've seen. I anticipate winning on Saturday and am looking forward to it."

Frankie Dettori, who will partner the 5-1 chance Predapio in preference to Swain (Mick Kinane), arrived hot from a success in the United States at the weekend. He has yet to figure in this event following defeats on Hailing and Kammtarra. "Silver Charm has got the best draw," Dettori said. "He can control the race and we will all have to do what he wants to do," he said.

DUBAI WORLD CUP DRAW: 1 Malek, 2 Predapio, 3 Lusa, 4 Silver Charm, 5 Swain, 6 Chantrelle, 7 Bonga, 8 Lusa Savage, 9 Silver Charm.

am delighted to get it over with," McCoy said. "I didn't think it would happen this quickly."

Quizzed as to his next target, McCoy said: "I've got some good rides at Liverpool and I'll probably take a break in June."

McCoy, who has had no injuries or suspensions this season, had a swift reminder of the perils of his profession when his mount in the handicap chase, Tellcherry, took a tumble. McCoy was swiftly on his feet.

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HYPERION'S TV TIPS

3.10 Lord High Admiral runs well with Michael Roberts in the saddle and is likely to blaze a trail down the middle of the track. This should ensure that low numbers are not disadvantaged. Brian Meehan frequently does well at the start of the Flat season on turf, and is represented here by DANCETHE-NIGHTAWAY, who should be suited by the fast early pace.

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Hussain's nous can put England house in order

WHEN success and failure in sport can be measured in 10,000ths of a second, England's 3-1 defeat by the West Indies, on the back of three days' poor cricket, may seem a huge margin. In fact, on the poor pitches much of this series was played on there has been little between the sides. Had Angus Fraser not spilled that vital caught and bowled in the first Trinidad Test, Michael Atherton's successor would not yet be so much as a wrinkle in the eye.

Once a captain goes, particularly in dramatic circumstances, there inevitably follows a frenzy of speculation over who the successor might be. For once the candidates seem obvious, and a straight choice between Nasser Hussain and Alec Stewart is where the wise money lies. Braver speculators, however, may like to consider Adam Hogg, Mark Ramprakash and Nick Knight, the recent A team captain.

For many, not least those who long for a return to starched whites and stubble-free chins, the safest option would be to pick Stewart. At 35, he is no longer young, but his dedication and fitness are such that he could do the job until someone younger feels ready to take over. However, apart from his lack of distinction as captain of Surrey, there is one simple reason why Stewart should not be captain, and it concerns the immediate future of the England team.

Quite simply, if our best young talent are to realise their potential, they must experience

Derek Pringle, Cricket Correspondent, believes Michael Atherton's successor as skipper must be able to lead by example

Test cricket without being over-exposed, especially early on. For that reason Stewart's dotage must be spent keeping wicket and batting at No 3 or No 6, so that the likes of Ben Hollioake can be blooded at No 7.

If hierarchies mean anything, then Hussain, Atherton's vice-captain for the last two winters, ought to get the job. A passionate man, Hussain has a shrewd and alert cricketing brain and is good at dealing with the press.

However, as the last remaining vestige of Raymond Illingworth's time as chairman of selectors – it was Illy who appointed him as Atherton's deputy – he has his critics, and many feel he is moody and selfish. Ironically, these were two of the "accusations" initially levelled at Graham Gooch, now part of the selectorial panel who will appoint the new captain, probably in May. But if Hussain has his faults, the pluses outweigh them, and like Hollioake, he captained England A in Pakistan three winters ago, with distinction.

Hollioake's resumption as England's one-day captain after his success in Sharjah is bound to link him with the main job. An instinctive captain, he inspires his players more by word than deed. Like Knight, he has yet to prove he is good enough to command a Test place. If England's goal is to

beat the best, you cannot carry players – not even captains.

Talk of Ramprakash is equally fatuous, at least at the moment. As captain of Middlesex, he is learning the ropes in the county game. In the Test arena he has only just found his feet let alone earned his epaulettes, and should not yet be burdened by anything more than scoring runs.

A lack of runs, according to the man himself, was one of the reasons that Atherton decided to resign. But while it is true that his career average has now dipped below 40 – the benchmark of a good Test player – figures had little to do with him quitting a job that consumed him both publicly and privately.

Symmetry is often overlooked in sport, and Atherton's 52-match reign, as England captain – a total only exceeded by Allan Border and Clive Lloyd – was bookended by 3-1 losses to the West Indies. In between, there were also two defeats at the hands of Australia, both 3-1, as well as Pakistan and South Africa.

Worst of all, and what perhaps set him on the slippery slope as far as the media were concerned was the wincing and mediocre performances in Zimbabwe, where England lost three one-day matches, after drawing the Test series 0-0. The volume and viciousness of

some of the criticism that ensued, left a bitter taste, which after the hysteria that followed the "soll in the pocket" incident two years earlier, caused him to harden, both inside and out.

Highlights, although fewer, would have included a drawn series against the West Indies and South Africa at home, as well as wins against New Zealand and India. Under him England certainly became more difficult to beat, but only at home.

Overall, one in four Tests were won under his leadership, a figure that revealed a lack of bowling depth and firepower. By his 50th Test in charge, some 50 players had been picked and it was a sure sign of England's weaknesses, that a clear majority of them were bowlers. It was similar sto-

ry this time, with only the 32-year-old Fraser, who took 27 wickets in the series, performing with any distinction, on mostly bowler-friendly pitches.

To compound matters, the batsmen, Stewart and Ramprakash apart, peaked too late. Mind you, Atherton's insistence on picking John Crawley ahead of Ramprakash for the Trinidad Tests had all the hallmarks of an own goal, as did the continued selection of a hopelessly out of sorts Jack Russell.

Stubborn, occasionally to the point of inflexibility, he is popular with team-mates. His intransigence is both his strength and his weakness, although a chronically bad back is also taking its toll. The V-sign that slipped out in Barbados was not so much directed at Philo Wal-

lace as against the situation, as England once again squandered a good batting performance by poor bowling. In a way, people should have rejoiced – it showed him to be not the emotional retard many like to suggest he is.

A resolute team man, he was talked out of resigning, not once, but twice. On the first occasion, following last summer's Ashes defeat at Trent Bridge, he had just dotted the i's on his resignation statement when Lord MacLaurin rang on his car phone and talked him round.

It is settled now and although he wants to play on for England and Lancashire, the captaincy defined rather than refined him. Unless his form and the joy he felt after his epic innings in Johannesburg return, life in the ranks may not appeal for long.

How England's captains compare

Captain	Tests	Wickets	Runs	Centuries	Half-centuries
Michael Atherton	52	10	1,800	1	1
Nasser Hussain	1	0	0	0	0
Alec Stewart	1	0	0	0	0
Adam Hogg	0	0	0	0	0
Mark Ramprakash	0	0	0	0	0
Nick Knight	0	0	0	0	0
Graham Gooch	0	0	0	0	0
Ben Hollioake	0	0	0	0	0
Angus Fraser	0	0	0	0	0
John Crawley	0	0	0	0	0
Jack Russell	0	0	0	0	0
Phil Wallance	0	0	0	0	0
Clive Lloyd	0	0	0	0	0
Allan Border	0	0	0	0	0
Clive Rice	0	0	0	0	0
David Gower	0	0	0	0	0
David Lloyd	0	0	0	0	0
Chris Smith	0	0	0	0	0
David Shepherd	0	0	0	0	0
David Gower	0	0	0	0	0
David Lloyd	0	0	0	0	0
Chris Smith	0	0	0	0	0
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Breen's dream start not enough

By Bill Pierce
in Olomouc

Czech Republic 2
Republic of Ireland 1

DESPITE the encouragement of an early goal from the Coventry City centre-back Gary Breen, an experimental Republic of Ireland side slipped to a narrow defeat in yesterday's friendly international against the Czech Republic.

The youngest team ever put out by the manager, Mick McCarthy - average age below 23 - eventually ran out of steam against the Euro 96 runners-up.

Breen, one of the more experienced internationals in McCarthy's team, rammed home his second goal in 13 appearances after some clever work by the Blackburn winger, Damien Duff, who was making his debut.

The fleet-footed teenager forced a corner with a forceful run down the left. Gary Kelly's flag-kick was flicked on by Everton's Gareth Farrelly and Breen lost his marker to shoot home after nine minutes.

The Czechs battled back - literally - as they tried to impress their new coach, Josef Chovanec, in his first match in charge. Pavel Kuka was lucky to stay on the pitch when he clearly punched Ireland's captain, Kenny Cunningham, full in the face. The two players squared up but the referee, Attila Juhas of Slovakia, missed the incident.

A reprieved Kuka set up the former Manchester United winger Karel Poborsky for a shot which flew over the top. Then Poborsky fired a free-kick over the bar in the 33rd minute as the Czechs pressed for an equaliser.

McCarthy sent on the 17-year-old Wolves striker Robbie Keane at half-time in place of Leeds' Alan Maybury to try to boost his attack. Keane thus became the youngest Irish international since Tottenham's Jimmy Holmes in 1961.

The impressive Charlton playmaker Mark Kinsella almost caught the Czech goalkeeper, Tomas Postulka, by surprise with a snap shot, but Ireland lost their lead within three minutes of the restart.

Lubos Kozel ran 50 yards from his own half and, as the Irish defenders backed off, he slipped the ball through to the hard-running Kuka, who caught it just before the byline and cut it back for Vladimir Smicer to fire home from six yards.

Ireland were pushed further and further back as Poborsky orchestrated a string of neat, incisive moves. The gangling substitute for Kuka, Vlastislav Lokvenec, volleyed just wide of a post and then headed against a post.

The Czechs took the lead after 75 minutes. Kozel was again the architect of the goal, running at the Irish defence and finding Smicer. He could not control the pass but the ball fell invitingly for another substitute, Eduard Lasota, to ram home the winner.

Meanwhile, Royle has signed another old City favourite, Ian Bishop, from West Ham United on a free transfer, but his hopes of signing the England Under-21 prospect John Curtis on loan from neighbours United have been dashed. Curtis is needed to stay with the United squad for the title bid because Michael Clegg is injured.



Cup warm-up: (left to right) Referees Esfandiar Bahamast of the United States, Lucien Bouchardreau of Niger, Pierluigi Collina of Italy and France's Mark Batta are put through their paces at a stadium during a physical training session organised for referees who will be officiating at this summer's World Cup finals in France. Photograph: Laurent Rebours/AP

Jones calls time on Crazy Gang

VINNIE JONES closed the chapter on the original Crazy Gang yesterday, as he became the last member to leave Wimbledon, joining Queen's Park Rangers as player-coach in a £500,000 deal.

Jones agreed to sign a three and a half year contract, subject to a medical, to work alongside Ray Harford, himself a former Wimbledon manager, in revitalising the First Division side. Jones admitted that it was "a huge wrench" to leave Wimbledon, the club he gave up his job as a head-carrier to join in 1986, with whom he won the FA Cup in 1988 and the team he re-joined in 1992 after a three-year

break with Leeds, Sheffield United and Chelsea.

Jones was the founder member of the Crazy Gang spirit that marked Wimbledon apart and enabled them to become as successful as many of their bigger rivals on meagre resources.

He said: "It's a bit sad. That's it now, the old Crazy Gang won't be there any more. But there are certainly boys at Wimbledon now who can take it on a step further. They've got their own little Crazy Gang there themselves and they'll go on to good things."

"But you can't live in the past. You have to go forward and I have to be looking to

coach and then to go into management."

Jones, never the model professional having been sent off 12 times in his career and once booked just three seconds into a game, said he was so excited about the move that his "heart was pounding out of his chest".

Tommy Burns, the former Celtic manager, is back in management with the struggling First Division side Reading.

Burns, who was youth development officer at Newcastle, has taken over from the caretaker-manager Alan Pardew. The former manager Terry Bullock resigned last week following protests from fans.

Burns was first offered the Reading job nine months ago when the then joint managers, Jimmy Quinn and Mick Gooding, left the club. He accepted verbally, but was then tempted away following a last-minute bid from Newcastle.

"I think I can save Reading from relegation, even though we have a tough run in our last seven games," Burns said. "I will definitely be strengthening the squad before tomorrow's deadline."

"I went to Newcastle instead of Reading because they were a big club and I thought I would find opportunities there. As time went by, I began to re-

alise that there were no opportunities and I wanted to be my own man and get into management."

Arsenal's Remi Garde has announced that he will retire at the end of the season. Garde has never really made an impact at Highbury since his move from Strasbourg in the summer of 1996 and said he was returning to live in Lyon, where he will work towards his coaching qualifications.

Wolves are setting themselves up for the FA Cup semi-final against Arsenal by signing the Australian international winger Robbie Slater from Southampton for £50,000.

The First Division side also resigned midfielder Neil Emblen yesterday, after selling him to Crystal Palace for £1.8m earlier this season. Wolves' young striker Jason Roberts has joined Bristol City on loan.

Newcastle have gone to their neighbours Darlington to sign two young players in a deal which could eventually be worth £1.8m to the Third Division side. They have paid an initial fee of £500,000 for strikers Paul Robinson, 19, and James Coppinger, 17.

Sunderland have made the former Southampton and Fulham manager Ian Branfoot director of their football academy.

Kennedy close to £1.75m Wimbledon move

By Alan Nixon

MARK KENNEDY is poised to complete a £1.75m transfer to Wimbledon after the London club tabled an offer to Liverpool larger than those of Nottingham Forest and Queen's Park Rangers.

The Republic of Ireland midfielder is heading for London for talks and will join the Dons before the transfer deadline if he agrees terms. Wimbledon have been chasing Kennedy for a year and finally raised the money to meet Liverpool's valuation.

Kennedy recently had a successful loan spell at QPR, who wanted to buy him, and has no future at Liverpool although he was recalled from his loan to play for the club.

John Spencer's future at Everton was plunged into doubt last night when he failed to agree terms on a permanent

move to Goodison. The Scottish striker was due to sign for £1.4m from QPR, but salary negotiations broke down. Spencer will stay on loan but could be recalled by Rangers.

Meanwhile, Everton's bid for Greek star Vassilis Borbokis is also up in the air as Sheffield United did a dramatic U-turn. News of Howard Kendall's £1.2m move has sparked anger at the FA Cup semi-finalists and caused a split on the board.

Now Kendall is fearing he may miss out on Borbokis as

Sheffield have second thoughts. The Blades have already lined up a replacement in Bradford's Chris Wilder.

Manchester City have made a bid to bring Mike Sheron back from QPR in a £2m deal made up of players plus cash. Sheron, who played for City last summer, has been told by the manager, Ray Harford, that he expects the deal to be completed. Now Sheron will have to agree terms with City, while the Manchester City manager, Joe Royle, also needs the players he

is swapping to accept the switch. The City striker Paul Dickov is included in the package and the former Arsenal player is prepared to return to London after being left out of Royle's side.

The midfielder Michael Brown is also involved although he starts a two-game ban at the weekend which makes him less attractive to Rangers.

City will pay some cash on top of the two players to get Sheron, who is poised to talk to them today in a bid to beat the transfer deadline. Sheron started

his career at City before moving on to Norwich and then Stoke. He is from St Helens and that might be a persuasive factor for him.

Meanwhile, Royle has signed another old City favourite, Ian Bishop, from West Ham United on a free transfer, but his hopes of signing the England Under-21 prospect John Curtis on loan from neighbours United have been dashed. Curtis is needed to stay with the United squad for the title bid because Michael Clegg is injured.

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AROUND THE RESORTS

Resort	Comment	Area open	Last snow	Lwr cm	Up cm	Forecast
ANDORRA						
Avoriaz	Hard snow early morning	100%	02.5	90	90	Pt cloudy
AUSTRIA						
Mayrhofen	Top runs loaded with fresh snow 85%	23.3	18	85		Cloud/snow
BULGARIA						
Borovets	Firm snow at all levels	100%	23.3	40	60	Sunny
CANADA						
Mont St Anne	Hardly groomed packed snow	90%	20.3	30	90	Sunny
FRANCE						
Avoriaz	Fresh snow at all levels	80%	23.3	10	85	Pt cloudy
ITALY						
Ugento	Some fresh snow at all levels	100%	23.3	40	60	Sun/snow
NORWAY						
Gaule	Firm packed snow	90%	18.3	50	50	Pt cloudy
SPAIN						
Serra Nevada	Spring-like conditions	90%	11.3	30	80	Cloudy periods
SWITZERLAND						
Leyers	Lower slopes poor	60%	23.3	5	40	Pt cloudy
UNITED STATES						
Aspen	Generally little packed/groomed	100%	19.3	15	80	Sunny spots

Snow Reports supplied by SNM Hotline

Football results

International friendly
Czech Rep 2-1 Rep of Ireland (0-1)
Striker 43
Laszlo 70
64/95
(at Andorra stadium, Olomouc)

AVON INSURANCE COMBINATION First Division
Wimbledon 0-1 West Ham (0-1) (Pough Lane)

Tuesday's results
1. INTERNATIONAL FRIENDLY: Scotland 4
Austria 0 (at Wembley, London)

2. UNDER-21 INTERNATIONAL FRIENDLIES:
Czech Republic 2-1 Ireland (0-1) (at Andorra stadium, Olomouc)

3. NATIONWIDE FOOTBALL LEAGUE:
Barnsley 1-1 Rotherham (0-0) (at Barnsley stadium, Barnsley)

4. BELL'S SCOTTISH LEAGUE First Division:
Rangers 1-1 Dundee (0-0) (at Ibrox, Glasgow)

5. FA YOUTH ALLIANCE Conference:
Charlton 1-1 Reading (0-0) (at Charlton stadium, Charlton)

6. RYMAN LEAGUE Premier Division:
Barnsley 1-1 Rotherham (0-0) (at Barnsley stadium, Barnsley)

7. NORTH WEST COUNTIES LEAGUE:
Widnes 1-1 Warrington (0-0) (at Widnes stadium, Widnes)

8. NORTH WEST COUNTIES LEAGUE:
Widnes 1-1 Warrington (0-0) (at Widnes stadium, Widnes)

9. NORTH WEST COUNTIES LEAGUE:
Widnes 1-1 Warrington (0-0) (at Widnes stadium, Widnes)

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Widnes 1-1 Warrington (0-0) (at Widnes stadium, Widnes)

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Widnes 1-1 Warrington (0-0) (at Widnes stadium, Widnes)

13. NORTH WEST COUNTIES LEAGUE:
Widnes 1-1 Warrington (0-0) (at Widnes stadium, Widnes)

14. NORTH WEST COUNTIES LEAGUE:
Widnes 1-1 Warrington (0-0) (at Widnes stadium, Widnes)

Sweeper lure for Redknapp

JAMIE REDKNAPP is hoping for another crack in the sweeper's role, despite his testing baptism for England in the Under-21 international against Switzerland in Aarau on Tuesday night.

The Liverpool midfielder, deployed in the position for the first time in his career as an experiment by Glenn Hoddle, the England coach, was only a qualified success as the Swiss earned a comfortable 2-0 win.

Redknapp said: "There's been a lot of pressure on me to have a go in the role and do well. If the result had been better, it would have reflected better on me. But it was my first time and I'd really like to have another go at it. You must concentrate on what you're doing, and if you lose the ball in that position it can be costly."

TEAMtalk

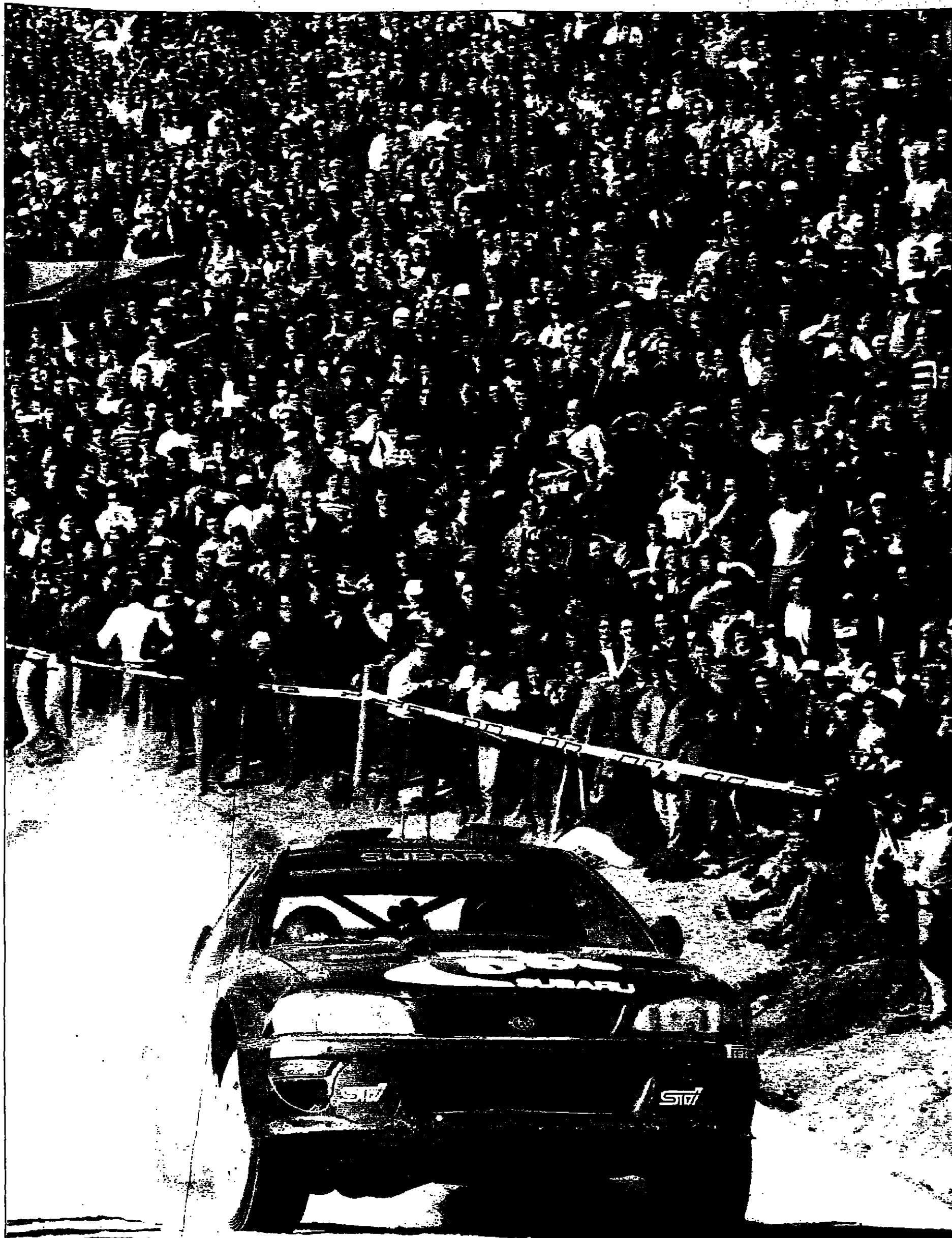
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Leading man: Britain's Colin McRae races past a hilltop crowd near Fafe yesterday, during the 24th stage of the Portuguese Rally which he went on to win

Photograph: AP

Robson ready for Gazza 'grief'

Football

THE Middlesbrough manager, Bryan Robson, joked yesterday that he is expecting "some grief" from his new £3.45m signing Paul Gascoigne.

But he added that although Gascoigne would be the centre of media attention he would still be worth every penny of his transfer fee. "There will be certain people looking for knocking stories. But these incidents are few and far between these days," Robson said. "I am sure Gazza will give me a little bit of grief from time to time but it will be worth it."

"It is the media who expect trouble, not me. I believe Gascoigne will respect me as a manager and I will respect him as a player."

And Robson believes that Gascoigne has now matured and will be looking to the mid-fielder to inspire his younger players. Robson said: "When a player reaches the age of 30, he becomes aware of the fact that he is in the second part of his career. He wants to work hard to make sure that he plays on as long as possible. Gazza loves his football and our fans will love him."

"Paul likes a few pints now and again, but he is one of the hardest trainers I have ever worked with. The other players will see how hard he works and it will be a big influence."

Gascoigne will be named in Middlesbrough's squad for the Coca-Cola Cup final against Chelsea at Wembley on Sunday if he passes his medical. If the medical tests are positive, Boro plan to unveil Gascoigne at a news conference today.

Supporters gathered outside Middlesbrough's training ground in the picturesque village of Hurworth to catch a glimpse of Britain's most famous footballer - but, like the press, they were banned from watching him train and banned from talking to him.

They were also quite comfortably outnumbered by the crows in the wood outside the main entrance.

Gazzamania? Well, not quite. One flat-capped pensioner did turn up with his bulldog on a lead, swearing he had changed his name to Gazza after hearing the news that Gascoigne had joined Middlesbrough from Rangers.

While Gazza may have lost some of his pace on the pitch these days, he showed a pretty fair turn of speed as he arrived for his first training session with his new team-mates. At 10.15 his Range-Rover sent 30 or so photographers scattering as it roared

through the main entrance of the training ground, with Gascoigne himself at the wheel and his minder, Jimmy "Five Bellies" Gardiner, sprawled across the passenger seat. There was neither a wave, nor a hint of smile. Maybe at 30 this is a new mature Gazza after all.

The mood among the fans was upbeat. The hope for them is that he contributes as much to the team as Juninho - the little Brazilian whose brilliant performances graced the Riverside Stadium last season.

Among today's sprinkling of fans was the Middlesbrough Supporters' Association secretary, Simon Bolton, though it should be said he was ferried the 15 miles from Middlesbrough to Hurworth in a taxi supplied by Sky television, after they became desperate for someone to talk to. Bolton, the man who looks uncannily like "Five Bellies", had been woken up this morning by Rangers fans, sad at the loss of Gascoigne.

"I can understand them being a bit upset. Gazza is a hero to them," Bolton said. "He is one of the best-known names in football. It was a big surprise when they heard he'd joined, but as long as he puts in 100 per cent like Juninho, he will have the fans' respect. But they won't put up with anyone freeloading here."

Gascoigne could make an immediate return to Ibrox at the end of next month in a testimonial for the veteran Rangers midfielder Ian Durrant.

At the moment the biggest selling point of the testimonial, which will be against Sheffield Wednesday on 28 April, is the return of the former Celtic forward Paolo Di Canio to Glasgow.

However, Gascoigne yesterday indicated he might offer to turn out in the match, as he regrets having left Rangers without having had the chance to bid farewell to his colleagues and the club's fans.

He told Virgin Radio: "Leaving Rangers was one of the saddest days in my career, but now I'm looking forward to my new challenge. I have the chance to work with Brian Robson, who was my idol when I was a player."

"Yet I'm sad to be leaving Rangers especially, as I never had the chance to say goodbye to the guys. But hopefully I can, as Ian Durrant has a testimonial coming up and I would like to say goodbye to the fans properly."

The main stumbling block could be Middlesbrough's promotion ambitions, with the match coming the week before their final League game of the season against Oxford.

Bohinen completes £1.45m Derby move

DERBY COUNTY have completed the signing of Lars Bohinen from Blackburn for £1.45m. The Norwegian international midfielder signed a three-year deal after meeting the Rams manager, Jim Smith, at Pride Park.

Bohinen failed to win a regular place at Blackburn, but Smith believes he will be ideally suited to Derby's style of play.

"We've still got nearly a quarter of our season to go, and Lars could play a substantial part in us getting into Europe," Smith said. "Lars is a quality player who scores goals and he will be given a free role in a very offensive midfield position. I'm looking forward to working with him."

Bohinen's short-term aim is to earn a place in Norway's World Cup squad, but he insisted: "I haven't just come here for that. Of course, I'll do all I can to get back in the Norway team, but I'm excited about coming to Derby County."

Bobby Robson, the former England manager, is consider-

ing a move back to the Netherlands to take charge of PSV Eindhoven for the second time in his career. PSV, where Robson was manager from 1990 to 1992, guiding them to the league title twice, have offered Robson a deal reported to be worth up to £15,000 a week.

The Dutch club are looking to fill the coaching vacancy left by the departure of Dick Advocaat, who is to take charge at Rangers next season.

A PSV spokesman confirmed that an offer had been made to Robson, who is currently director of football at Barcelona, following talks with the Dutch club's chairman, Harry van Raaij, in Spain.

However, the Dutch media believe Robson may be seen as a temporary solution and therefore only offered a one-year contract as the man PSV are said to really want - the former player and current Bruges coach Eric Gerets - will not be released from his existing contract until 1999.

First win for McRae

Rallying

IN THE end it came down to just over two seconds, but it was enough for Britain's Colin McRae to record his first victory of the season in the Portuguese Rally yesterday.

In a formidable display of aggressive driving, the 29-year-old Scot powered his Subaru Impreza into the lead on Monday's third stage and never relinquished command of the race to claim his 14th career win.

However, the driver who made McRae sweat was the Spaniard Carlos Sainz, whose late

charge for victory in his Toyota Corolla failed by just 2.1sec.

Sainz, who started the final day 27 seconds off the lead, nearly overtook McRae with the fastest times in five of the last leg's eight stages.

McRae, who took third place in Monte Carlo but failed to finish in the following two events of the season, was determined to win in Portugal to avoid slipping further back in the overall drivers' standings. He is now fourth in the world championship with 14 points.

Sainz has moved clear at top with 22 points and has lifted Toyota to 26 points, one more

than Mitsubishi, in the manufacturers' championship.

Finland's Juha Kankkunen, the joint championship leader with Sainz before Portugal, finished out of the points in seventh place to remain on 16 points. Belgium's Freddy Loix finished third, 45.8 seconds off the pace, in his Toyota Corolla, while Britain's Richard Burns in a Mitsubishi Carisma finished fourth, 53.1sec behind.

Finland's Tomi Makinen, the reigning world champion and last year's winner in Portugal, spun off the road and into a tree on Tuesday.

Positions, Digest, page 28

Atherton quit over batting

Cricket

MIKE ATHERTON's chronic lack of batting form was the main reason behind his decision to resign as England captain.

The England coach, David Lloyd, yesterday revealed why Atherton quit after losing the final Test, and with it the series 3-1. "Over a fairly lengthy period now he has been short of runs, and he'd taken enough," he said.

Lloyd believes it would be "right and proper" for Atherton to be consulted on his successor. Alec Stewart is the favourite, ahead of Nasser Hussain, Adam Hoggie and Mark Ramprakash. "I expect I will also be asked for an opinion, and if I am I will give it," added Lloyd.

Lloyd was too upset on Tuesday night to speak about either the Test defeat or Atherton's resignation. He said yesterday: "There were so many different

emotions. When Hussain and Thorpe were together we were in control. But then there was one moment of madness with the run-out and suddenly one wicket brought seven. As for Mike, when he was in charge and we were bowling sides out he was as good a captain as anyone. But he never had bowlers at either end with more than 300 Test wickets to their name and that has got to be a big factor in his record."

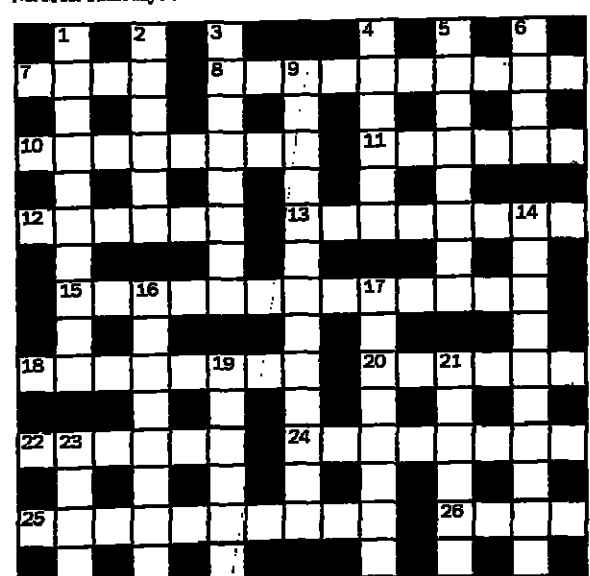
Derek Pringle, page 30

THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD

No. 3568, Thursday 26 March

By Phil

Wednesday's solution



- ACROSS**
- 7 Foodstuff's a source of iron? Thanks (4)
 - 8 See one take on first instrument of torture (4, 6)
 - 10 Distracted, Paul came to make an apology (3, 5)
 - 11 Queen beginning to rule, say, in Australia (6)
 - 12 Collection of antiquities to make you think and sound hesitant (6)
 - 13 Oh! Crop's lying around farmer's first meadow (8)
 - 15 After tucking into beer, writing a statement of faith (8, 5)
 - 18 Confirmed bachelor's not quite intent pronunciation (8)
 - 20 Left has irritation with Government's first mishap (6)
 - 22 Understand trick (4, 2)
 - 24 A pause during specially-arranged travel (8)
 - 25 Outspoken and favouring mostly the Conservatives? (10)
 - 26 Great many killed (4)
- DOWN**
- 1 Give more freedom to rendering of Elgar etude (10)
 - 2 Inept, getting left on the other side of the Chunnel (6)
 - 3 I'd turned up scheme to secure graduate ambassador material? (8)
 - 4 Sycophantic troops following Sergeant Major (6)
 - 5 Call to have team close to the action (8)
 - 6 Jack Spral's favourite bank? (4)
 - 9 Working with lace, say, having little financial backing (2, 1, 10)
 - 14 Married couple, say, going over the Spanish part of church (4, 6)
 - 16 Variety of top-rate English musical entertainment (8)
 - 17 Think it should be found in county's spectators (8)
 - 19 I almost blush about new bypass (6)
 - 21 Doctor ruins hospital - lots of patients all at once? (6)
 - 23 Doctor brought in a second man (4)

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